

LETTERS
OF THE LATE
Rev. Mr. LAURENCE STERNE,
TO
HIS MOST INTIMATE FRIENDS,
ON VARIOUS OCCASIONS,
AS PUBLISHED BY HIS DAUGHTER
MRS. MEDALLE AND OTHERS:
AND INCLUDING THE
LETTERS BETWEEN YORICK AND ELIZA.
TO WHICH ARE ADDED
An Appendix of XXXII. Letters, never
printed before;
A FRAGMENT in the Manner of RABELAIS;
AND THE
HISTORY OF A WATCH-COAT,
WITH EXPLANATORY NOTES.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOLUME THE SECOND.

Containing YORICK's Letters to ELIZA, together with her Answers; Letters published anonymously, and the History of a Watch-Coat.

VIENNA:

Printed for R. SAMMER, Bookseller.
M. DCC. XCVII.



THE
SELECT WORKS
OF
LAURENCE STERNE
M. A.

In Nine Volumes.

VOLUME the EIGHTH.

CONTAINING
STERNE'S LETTERS.

Vol. II.

V I E N N A:

Printed for R. SAMMER, Bookseller.
M. DCC. XCVIII.



LETTERS
WRITTEN BETWEEN
YORICK AND ELIZA.
PUBLISHED BY
AN ANONYMOUS EDITOR
IN M. DCC. LXXV.

LETTERS

WRITTEN BETWEEN

YORICK AND ELIZA



London: Printed by R. & A. Smith, 1833.

ADVERTISEMENT OF THE EDITOR.

THE following Letters of YORICK having been separately printed from those of ELIZA in the original edition, so as to make up two volumes, the editor of the present edition has thought it more convenient and agreeable to the Reader to publish them together in the same order as they have been written, and cast them into one volume. By this way the Reader will neither be at a loss in the perusal of them, nor be obliged to look for ELIZA's answers, which have been printed before in the second volume. For this reason the editor has also set before the whole work the two Prefaces, which were formerly prefixed to each respective volume.

P R E F A C E
T O
Y O R I C K ' s L E T T E R S .

IN the Preface prefixed to the first Edition of these LETTERS, which appeared in the year 1775, and were then dedicated to LORD APSLEY (the present EARL BATHURST) the EDITOR remarks, that he „purposely waves all proofs which might be drawn concerning their authenticity, from the character of the Gentleman who had the perusal of the originals, and, with ELIZA's permission, faithfully copied them at Bombay in the East-Indies; from the testimony of many reputable families in London, who knew and loved ELIZA, caressed and admired Mr. STERNE, and were well acquainted with the tender friendship between them; and from many curious anecdotes in the Letters themselves, any one of which were fully sufficient to authenticate them.”

He then proceeds to observe, that „as the Public is unquestionably entitled to every kind of information concerning the Characters contained in these LETTERS which consists with the duties of humanity and a good citizen; that is, a minute acquaintance with those of whom honourable mention is made, or the EDITOR is furnished with authorities to vindicate from Mr. STERNE's censures, which, as a man of warm temper and lively imagination, he was perhaps sometimes hurried into without due reflection; he persuades himself that no party concerned will or can be offended with this publication, especially if it is considered that without such information it would be cold and unentertaining; that by publishing their merits he cannot be understood to intend them any injury, and without it, it would in himself fail in his duty to the public.”

„ELIZA, (the EDITOR continues) the lady to whom these Letters are addressed, is Mrs. ELIZABETH DRAPER, wife of DANIEL DRAPER, Esq; Counsellor at Bombay, and at present Chief of the English factory at Surat; a gentleman very much

respected in that quarter of the globe. She is by birth an East-Indian; but the circumstance of being born in the country not proving sufficient to defend her delicate frame against the heats of that burning climate, she came to England for the recovery of her health, when by accident she became acquainted with Mr. STERNE. He immediately discovered in her a mind so congenial with his own, so enlightened, so refined, and so tender, that their mutual attraction presently joined them in the closest union that purity could possibly admit of. He loved her as his friend, and prided in her as his pupil. All her concerns became presently his; her health, her circumstances, her reputation, her children, were his; his fortune, his time, his country, were at her disposal, so far as the sacrifice of all or any of these might, in his opinion, contribute to her real happiness."

„Mr. and Mrs. JAMES, so frequently and honourably mentioned in these LETTERS, are the worthy heads of an opulent family in this City."

„MISS LIGHT, now Mrs. STRATTON,

was accidentally a passenger in the same ship with ELIZA, and instantly engaged her friendship and esteem; but being mentioned in one of Mrs. DRAPER's letters to Mr. STERNE in somewhat of a comparative manner with herself, his partiality for her, as she modestly expressed it, took the alarm, and betrayed him into some expressions, the coarseness of which cannot be excused. Mrs. DRAPER declares that this lady was entirely unknown to him, and infinitely superior to his idea of her: she has been lately married to GEORGE STRATTON, Esq; Counsellor at Madras" *.

„The manner** in which Mr. STERNE's acquaintance with the celebrated Lord BATHURST***, the friend and companion of ADDISON, SWIFT, POPE, STEELE, and all the finest wits of the last age, commenced, cannot fail to attract the attention of the curious reader."

„It is very much to be lamented, that ELIZA's modesty was invincible to all the

* She is since dead.

** See Letter III.

*** Father of the present Earl Bathurst.

EDITOR's endeavours to obtain her answers to these LETTERS: her wit, penetration, and judgment, her happiness in the epistolary style, so rapturously commended by Mr. STERNE, could not fail to furnish a rich entertainment for the public. He could not help telling her, that he wished to God she was really possessed of that vanity with which she was charged;" to which she replied, „that she was so far from acquitting herself of vanity, that she suspected that to be the cause why she could not prevail on herself to submit her letters to the public eye; for although Mr. STERNE was partial to every thing of her's, she could not hope that the world would be so too." With this answer the EDITOR was obliged to be contented.

„The reader will remark, that these LETTERS have various signatures; sometimes he signs STERNE, sometimes YORICK, and to one or two he signs HER BRAMIN. Although it is pretty generally known who the BRAMINS are, yet lest any body should be at a loss, it may not be amiss to observe, that the principal

cast or tribe among the idolatrous Indians are the BRAMINS, and out of the chief class of this cast come the Priests so famous for their austerities, and the shocking torments, and frequently death, they voluntarily expose themselves to, on a religious account. Now, as Mr. STERNE was a Clergyman, and ELIZA an Indian by birth, it was customary with her to call him HER BRAMIN, which he accordingly, in his pleasant moods, uses as a signature."

„It remains only to take some notice of the family marked with asterisks, on whom Mr. STERNE has thought proper to shed the bitterest gall of his pen. It is however evident, even from some passages in the LETTERS themselves, that Mrs. DRAPER* could not be easily prevailed on to see this family in the same

* As the curiosity of the reader may probably be excited to inquire concerning the fate of this lady, it is thought necessary to mention, that she hath been dead some years; and it is with regret we add, that some circumstances which attended the latter part of her life are said to have reflected no credit either on her prudence or discretion.

odious light in which they appeared to her perhaps over-zealous friend. He, in the heat, or hurry of his affection, might have accepted suspicious circumstances as real evidences of guilt, or listened too unguardedly to the insinuations of their enemies."

P R E F A C E
T O
ELIZA'S LETTERS.

THE editor of the elegant and pathetic letters, from YORICK to ELIZA, which have lately made their appearance in the world, says, „It is very much to be lamented, that Eliza's modesty was invincible to all the publisher's endeavours to obtain her answers to these letters.”

„Her wit, penetration, and judgment, her happiness in the epistolary style, so rapturously recommended by Mr. Sterne, could not fail to furnish a rich entertainment for the public—the publisher could not help telling her, that he wished to God, she really was possessed of that vanity with which she was charged.”

We should as sincerely lament Eliza's invincible modesty, as the editor of those letters, if we thought her sensibility, in

that respect, would preclude the publication of such valuable compositions; or if we imagined that her too scrupulous partiality for her particular friends, or in the most enlarged idea, the circle of her acquaintance, ought in justice to impede the more general gratification of that PUBLIC, who by means of YORICK's letters addressed to her, must of course become her admirers.

Nor ought Eliza to blame us—the delicate mind is frequently too severe to itself, and abridges its own merit of that fame, which is justly its due.

It is therefore incumbent on the friends of such a being, to break through such partial restrictions, and disobey those orders which are only the effects of a too timorous sensibility.

To disobey the self-denying rigour of such commands, to put a negative on such *bashful delicacy*, if I may be allowed the expression, is not only friendly, but even meritorious.

Real merit is always modest, it seeks solitude, would pine in secret, and sink unnoticed into oblivion.

Then surely that person is deserving of applause, or at least the thanks of the public, who draws it from its retirement, brings it to the light for public benefit, and places it in that point of view in which it ought to be conspicuously seen, and to shine for general imitation, and improvement.

Eliza's only objection to the publication of her letters, was, that she thought, „Although Mr. Sterne was partial to every thing of her's, she could not hope „that the world would be so too.”

But we will venture to affirm, that the world will not think this argument ought to be deemed sufficiently strong, to deprive them of such a valuable entertainment:

For the excellency of the epistles themselves, and the great deference which should be paid to the judgment of Mr. Sterne, are reasons more than sufficient to overturn the objection — — And that once fallen, not a syllable can be justly advanced against this publication.

For a character of Eliza's letters, take Mr. Sterne's own words:

„Who taught you the art of writing so
„sweetly, Eliza? — You absolutely have
„exalted it to a science.

„When I am in want of ready cash,
„and ill health will permit my genius to
„exert itself, I shall print your letters as
„*finished Essays*, by an *unfortunate In-*
„*dian Lady*.”

„The style is new, and would almost
„be a sufficient recommendation, for their
„selling well without merit:

„But their sense, natural ease, and
„spirit, are not to be equalled, I believe,
„in this section of the globe—nor, I will
„answer for it, by any of your country-
„women in your’s.”

Then what a crime would the possessor
of such literary jewels, such a mental trea-
sure, have been guilty of, in secluding it
from the public, and, like the miser, lock-
ing that from the light, which generously
diffused, must be pleasing and useful to all.

Nothing but her native diffidence could
have induced Eliza to have entertained
the least idea of being so unkind, or of
wishing her friends to be so selfish.

The curiosity of the public is raised by

the publication of Yorick's letters — it ought to be gratified with the counterpart.

Nay, the lady's *fame* is concerned — it is necessary that her answers should be published — it is necessary to secure her reputation from the smallest shadow of censure, to evince before the face of the world, that her ideas were not less pure than her *Bramin's*.

The publication of the following letters will prove, that her expressions, tho' as animated, were no less scrupulously delicate than her Yorick's :

And likewise, that Platonism, so much ridiculed, so long thought a chimera, may exist, and even with the strongest sensibility, and warmest imagination.

Though Eliza was too diffident of her abilities, or nice in her ideas, to oblige the public with her letters to Yorick, yet she indulged many of her friends with copies of them — these again gratified many within the circle of their acquaintance with the same favour.

And thus they, in fact, became published ; unless the word signifies nothing, without being applied to what issues from the press only.

Thus we can only claim the merit of giving a more fair, convenient, and general edition of these elegant epistles, of which we received correct copies from a lady, not more dignified by her rank in life, than elevated by her understanding.

She gave us leave, if we thought proper to use her name—but we declined it, thinking the letters sufficient to recommend themselves, and the best testimonies in their own favour:

Agreeable to Mr. Sterne's opinion, concerning Eliza's picture:

„I requested, says he, that you would
„come simple and unadorned, when you
„sat for me, knowing, as I see with un-
„prejudiced eyes, that you could receive
„no addition from the silk-worm's aid,
„or jeweller's polish.”

Thus we send Eliza's answers to Yorick's epistles into the world, without any recommendation, except their own intrinsic merit.

LETTER I.

YORICK TO ELIZA.

ELIZA will receive my books with this. The sermons came all hot from the heart: I wish that I could give them any title to be offered to your's. — The others came from the head—I am more indifferent about their reception. —

I know not how it comes about, but I am half in love with you—I ought to be wholly so; for I never valued, or saw more good qualities to value, or thought more of one of your sex than of you: so adieu,

Yours,
faithfully, if not affectionately,

L. STERNE.

LETTER II.

ELIZA TO YORICK.

MY BRAMIN,

I RECEIVED your Sentimental Journey—your imagination has strange powers—

Sterne's Letters, Vol. II.

B

it has awakened feelings in my heart, which I never knew I possessed—You make me vain—you make me in love with my own sensibility.—

I bedewed your pathetic pages with tears—but they were tears of pleasure—my heart flowed through my eyes—every particle of tenderness in my whole frame was awakened.—

You take the surest method to improve the understanding—you convince the reason, by touching the soul.—

Sure the greatest compliments an author can receive, are the sighs and tears of his readers—such sincere applause I amply gave you.

I beg, if you value me, that you will not flatter me—I am already too vain—and praise from a man of sense is dangerous.

I am in the utmost extent of the word,
your

Cordial friend,

ELIZA.

L E T T E R III.

YORICK TO ELIZA.

I CANNOT rest, Eliza, though I shall call on you at half past twelve, till I know how you do. — May thy dear face smile, as thou risest, like the sun of this morning. I was much grieved to hear of your alarming indisposition yesterday; and disappointed too, at not being let in. — Remember, my dear, that a friend has the same right as a physician. The etiquettes of this town, you'll say, say otherwise. — No matter! Delicacy and propriety do not always consist in observing their frigid doctrines.

I am going out to breakfast, but shall be at my lodgings by eleven; when I hope to read a single line under thy own hand, that thou art better, and wilt be glad to see thy

9 o'clock.

BRAMIN.

LETTER IV.

ELIZA TO YORICK.

MY BRAMIN,

IT is with pleasure I inform you, that I am better—because I believe it will give you pleasure.

You tell me, „A friend has the same right as a phyfician.”

Then you may claim a double right—you are my friend, and phyfician, the moft valuable of phyficians, the phyfician of my mind—come then, and bring the beft of cordials—the cordial of fentiment—if thy converfation does not eradicate my diforder entirely—it will make me forget that I am ill—I fhall feel no pain while you are prefent.

To wifh to fee you—you find is the intereft, as well as defire of

Ten o'clock.

ELIZA.

LETTER V.

YORICK TO ELIZA.

I GOT thy letter last night, Eliza, on my return from Lord Bathurst's, where I dined, and where I was heard, as I talked of thee an hour without intermission, with so much pleasure and attention, that the good old Lord toasted your health three different times; and now he is in his eighty-fifth year, says he hopes to live long enough to be introduced as a friend to my fair Indian disciple, and to see her eclipse all other nabobesses as much in wealth, as she does already in exterior and, what is far better, in interior merit. I hope so too. This nobleman is an old friend of mine.—You know he was always the protector of men of wit and genius; and has had those of the last century, Addison, Steele, Pope, Swift, Prior, etc. etc. always at his table—The manner in which his notice began of me, was as singular as it was polite.—He came up to me, one day, as I was at the Princess of

Wales's court. „I want to know you, Mr. Sterne; but it is fit you should know, also, who it is that wishes this pleasure. You have heard, continued he, of an old Lord Bathurst, of whom your Popes and Swifts have sung and spoken so much: I have lived my life with geniuses of that cast; but have survived them; and, despairing ever to find their equals, it is some years since I have closed my accounts, and shut up my books, with thoughts of never opening them again; but you have kindled a desire in me of opening them once more before I die; which I now do; so go home and dine with me.”—This nobleman, I say, is a prodigy; for at eighty-five he has all the wit and promptness of a man of thirty. A disposition to be pleased, and a power to please others beyond whatever I knew: added to which, a man of learning, courtesy, and feeling.

He heard me talk of thee, Eliza, with uncommon satisfaction; for there was only a third person; and of sensibility, with us.—And a most sentimental afternoon, 'till nine o'clock, have we passed! But

thou, Eliza, wert the star that conducted and enlivened the discourse.—And when I talked not of thee, still didst thou fill my mind, and warm every thought I uttered; for I am not ashamed to acknowledge I greatly miss thee.—Best of all good girls! the sufferings I have sustained the whole night on account of thine, Eliza, are beyond my power of words.—Assuredly does Heaven give strength proportioned to the weight he lays upon us! Thou hast been bowed down, my child, with every burden that sorrow of heart, and pain of body, could inflict upon a poor being; and still thou tellest me, thou art beginning to get ease;—thy fever gone, thy sickness, the pain in thy side vanishing also.—May every evil so vanish that thwarts Eliza's happiness, or but awakens thy fears for a moment!—Fear nothing, my dear!—Hope every thing; and the balm of this passion will shed its influence on thy health, and make thee enjoy a spring of youth and cheerfulness, more than thou hast hardly yet tasted.

And so thou hast fixed thy Bramin's portrait over thy writing desk; and wilt

consult it in all doubts and difficulties.—
Grateful and good girl! Yorick smiles contentedly over all thou doest; his picture does not do justice to his own complacency!

Thy sweet little plan and distribution of thy time—how worthy of thee! Indeed, Eliza, thou leavest me nothing to direct thee in; thou leavest me nothing to require, nothing to ask—but a continuation of that conduct which won my esteem, and has made me thy friend for ever.

May the roses come quick back to thy cheeks, and the rubies to thy lips! But trust my declaration, Eliza, that thy husband, if he is the good, feeling man I wish him, will press thee to him with more honest warmth and affection, and kiss thy pale, poor, dejected face, with more transport, than he would be able to do, in the best bloom of all thy beauty;—and so he ought, or I pity him. He must have strange feelings, if he knows not the value of such a creature as thou art!

I am glad Miss Light goes with you. She may relieve you from many anxious moments.—I am glad your ship-mates are

friendly beings. You could least dispense with what is contrary to your own nature, which is soft and gentle, Eliza.—It would civilize savages.—Though, pity were it, thou shouldst be tainted with the office! How canst thou make apologies for thy last letter? 'Tis most delicious to me, for the very reason you excuse it. Write to me, my child, only such. Let them speak the easy carelessness of a heart that opens itself, any how, and every how, to a man you ought to esteem and trust. Such, Eliza, I write to thee,—and so I should ever live with thee, most artlessly, most affectionately, if Providence permitted thy residence in the same section of the globe; for I am, all that honour and affection can make me,

Thy

BRAMIN.

LETTER VI.

ELIZA TO YORICK.

KIND YORICK,

I PERUSED your epistle, as I always do, with infinite pleasure—I am charmed

Sterne's Letters. Vol. II.

C

with your account of that worthy nobleman, Lord Bathurst—half a score of such as him would make old age amiable, redeem it from the character of moroseness, and render it the most desirable period of life.

The company his Lordship has kept, and the friendships he has courted, sufficiently evidence his understanding—the manner of his introducing himself to you, at the Princess of Wales's Court, is enough to render his name respectable.—

I am obliged to his Lordship for his good opinion of me, though I only shone like the moon with borrowed light—I cannot merit his encomiums—they are not due to myself; but to my picture, as drawn by your brilliant imagination—your kind fancy was the sun, that gave me the light, which his Lordship admired.—

You speak with seraphic truth, when you say, heaven gives us strength, proportioned to the weight it lays upon us—I have experienced it—for I found fortitude increase with my illness—and as my health decayed, my dependance upon providence grew stronger.—

But I am better—thank heaven—you bid me hope every thing—I do—hope is the balm of my soul, the kind soother of my anguish upon all occasions.—

The time approaches for my departure from England—I could wish you to be of the voyage—your conversation would shorten the tedious hours, and smooth the rugged bosom of the deep. I should find no terrors from the wavering elements, nor dread the dangers that surrounded my floating prison.—

Yet why should I wish to call you from your peaceful retirement, and domestic happiness—to trust the precarious elements, and seek an inclement sky—cruel thought! Eliza, be content to bear thy Yorick's image in thy mind—and to treasure his instructions in thy heart—then thou wilt be properly sustained against the changes of torture, and dangers of the deep—then thou wilt be in the true sense of the expression,

YORICK'S ELIZA.

LETTER VII.

ELIZA TO YORICK.

KIND YORICK,

MY nerves are so weak, and my hand trembles so much, that I am afraid this scrawl will hardly be intelligible—I am extremely ill—indeed I am.—

I am obliged to exert myself to write this—present my kind respects to Mr. and Mrs. James—they are in my heart—they occupy a share of my cordial friendship, with my Bramin—may Heaven preserve you all from experiencing the anguish my poor weak being is oppressed with.—

But think not Yorick that I complain—no—

Bountiful Heaven, I thank thee for my afflictions—thou chastifest me for my good—my poor vain heart had wandered from the thoughts of futurity—thou hast brought it back, and fixed its attention to the point where it ought to dwell—O keep me from the sin of repining, and give me strength to bear my afflictions with patience.

The family of the ***s have been with me—they are truly amiable beings—I admire them greatly—they were extremely afflicted at my situation—I believe they felt for me—I am sure they regard me.

I am taken with a strange dizziness—I can say no more, adieu.

ELIZA.

L E T T E R VIII.

YORICK TO ELIZA.

I WRITE this, Eliza, at Mr. James's, whilst he is dressing, and the dear girl, his wife, is writing beside me to thee.—I got your melancholy billet before we sat down to dinner. 'Tis melancholy indeed, my dear, to hear so piteous an account of thy sickness! Thou art encountered with evils enough, without that additional weight! I fear it will sink thy poor soul, and body with it, past recovery—Heaven supply thee with fortitude! We have talked of nothing but thee, Eliza, and of thy sweet virtues, and endearing conduct all the afternoon. Mrs. James,

and thy Bramin, have mixt their tears a hundred times, in speaking of thy hardships, thy goodness, thy graces.—The ****s, by heavens, are worthless! I have heard enough to tremble at the articulation of the name.—How could you, Eliza, leave them, or suffer them to leave you rather, with impressions the least favourable? I have told thee enough to plant disgust against their treachery to thee, to the last hour of thy life! Yet still, thou toldest Mrs. James at last, that thou believest they affectionately love thee.—Her delicacy to my Eliza, and true regard to her ease of mind, have saved thee from hearing more glaring proofs of their baseness—For God's sake write not to them; nor foul thy fair character with such polluted hearts—*They* love thee! What proof? Is it their actions that say so? or their zeal for those attachments, which do thee honour, and make thee happy? or their tenderness for thy fame? No—But they *weep*, and say *tender things*.—Adieu to all such for ever. Mrs. James's honest heart revolts against the idea of ever returning them one visit.—I honour her, and I ho-

nour thee, for almost every act of thy life, but this blind partiality for an unworthy being.

Forgive my zeal, dear girl, and allow me a right which arises only out of that fund of affection I have and shall preserve for thee to the hour of my death! Reflect, Eliza, what are my motives for perpetually advising thee? think whether I can have any, but what proceed from the cause I have mentioned! I think you are a very deserving woman; and that you want nothing but firmness, and a better opinion of yourself, to be the best female character I know. I wish I could inspire you with a share of that vanity your enemies lay to your charge; though to me it has never been visible, because I think in a well turned mind, it will produce good effects.

I probably shall never see you more; yet I flatter myself you'll sometimes think of me with pleasure; because you must be convinced I love you, and so interest myself in your rectitude, that I had rather hear of any evil befalling you, than your want of reverence for yourself. I had not

power to keep this remonfrance in my breast.—It's now out; so adieu. Heaven watch over my Eliza.

Thine,

YORICK.

LETTER IX.

ELIZA TO YORICK.

MY BRAMIN,

I FIND myself rather better to-day, my head is easier.

Accept my grateful thanks—make them acceptable to Mr. and Mrs. James—for the concern you have all had upon my account—my overflowing heart thanks ye—though my expressions are too weak to describe its feelings.

You have certainly been misinformed—I cannot think the *** family really merit the asperity with which you mention it—I cannot think ill of any being, without having had some occasion—I would not wish to live a slave to suspicion—that were to be miserable indeed—I am sensible, my Bramin would not conceive a

hard opinion of any one, without some grounds—but he may have been deceived—his good heart may have been too open to the designing—and the ***s misrepresented.

I must be exceedingly troublesome to you—I want your assistance to execute a few commissions—excuse your Eliza—she cannot take that freedom—she cannot trust any person else.

I must intreat, that you would procure directions from Mr. Zumps, in what manner I am to tune my piano-forté—as I design it to be my harmonious companion, during the voyage.

I should be glad of about a dozen brass screws, to put up in my cabin, as conveniences to hang any thing upon.

I must have a proper journal book, to amuse myself, in minuting the particulars of my voyage.

An arm-chair will likewise be useful to me.

Be kind enough to send any parcel for me to the address of Mr. Abraham Walker, pilot at Deal.

Though my health improves, I am not

entirely at ease in my mind—but let me not give pain to the heart that feels too much for me.

My warmest affections to Mrs. James, —she is a dear creature—my respects to Mr. James—Heaven bless them both—may the smiles of health and prosperity attend them.

God is my eternal friend, to him I look for protection, and while I breathe the air of mortality, my regards are on you—you are my adviser—my monitor—my better genius—may our reciprocal affections continue pure and unchanged, till the dissolution of our frail beings—and if an intercourse is allowed between the spirits of the departed, may we enjoy that exalted—that refined, ethereal rapture—which the ardent seraphims know, while glowing with the emanations of their eternal Creator.

Mayest thou enjoy uninterrupted happiness, till the angel of death wings thee to the regions of bliss,

Adieu,

ELIZA.

L E T T E R X.

YORICK TO ELIZA.

TO whom should Eliza apply in her distress, but to her friend who loves her? why then, my dear, do you apologize for employing me? Yorick would be offended, and with reason, if you ever sent commissions to another, which he could execute: I have been with Zumps; and your piano-forté must be tuned from the brass middle-string of your guitar, which is C.—I have got you a hammer too, and a pair of plyers to twist your wire with; and may every one of them, my dear, vibrate sweet comfort to my hopes! I have bought you ten handsome brass screws, to hang your necessaries upon: I purchased twelve; but stole a couple from you to put up in my own cabin, at Coxwould.—I shall never hang, or take my hat off one of them, but I shall think of you. I have bought thee, moreover, a couple of iron screws, which are more to be depended on than brass, for the globes.

I have written, also, to Mr. Abraham Walker, pilot at Deal, that I had dispatched these in a packet directed to his care; which I desired he would seek after, the moment the Deal machine arrived. I have, moreover, given him directions, what sort of an arm-chair you would want, and have directed him to purchase the best that Deal could afford, and take it with the parcel, in the first boat that went off. Would I could, Eliza, so supply all thy wants, and all thy wishes! It would be a state of happiness to me.—The journal is as it should be—all but its contents. Poor, dear, patient being! I do more than pity you; for I think I lose both firmness and philosophy, as I figure to myself your distresses. Do not think I spoke last night with too much asperity of ***; there was cause; and besides, a good heart ought not to love a bad one; and, indeed, cannot. But, adieu to the ungrateful subject.

I have been this morning to see Mrs. James—She loves thee tenderly, and unfeignedly.—She is alarmed for thee—She says thou lookedst most ill and melan-

choly on going away. She pities thee. I shall visit her every Sunday, while I am in town. As this may be my last letter, I earnestly bid thee farewell.—May the God of Kindness be kind to thee, and approve himself thy protector, now thou art defenceless! And, for thy daily comfort, bear in thy mind this truth, that whatever measure of sorrow and distress is thy portion, it will be repaid to thee in a full measure of happiness, by the Being thou hast wisely chosen for thy eternal friend.

Farewell, farewell, Eliza; whilst I live, count upon me as the most warm and disinterested of earthly friends.

YORICK.

LETTER XI.

ELIZA TO YORICK,

MY BRAMIN,

I HAVE received the box—you have taken a deal of trouble—my heart feels your kindness, and overflows with gratitude.

The ship I am to sail with is extremely neat—my cabin is convenient, but small—it is to be painted white—so I shall be obliged to land, in order to accommodate myself with a lodging.—I shall therefore expect, by every post, a continuance of the happiness which the effusions of my Bramin's fancy, and his preceptive sentiments always give me.

May Heaven continue your health for the benefit of mankind, and to bless Eliza, since the effusions of a friendship, at once so delicate and rational, are the most salutary pleasures that can be felt by the sensibility of

ELIZA.

LETTER XII.

ELIZA TO YORICK.

DEAR BRAMIN,

THIS is my birth day—I am twenty-five years of age—yet years, when past, seem but as so many hours—the moments of anguish are the only portions of time, which we can count—we feel their weight

—they pass tediously by—we blame them for being tardy, tho' their speed continually takes from the space of our existence—But how fleeting are the moments in which we enjoy ourselves—they steal unperceived away, and all our pleasures are but short-lived dreams.

To the mind debased by vice, or clouded by doubts, how dreadful must the rapidity of time appear—when every minute takes from their much-loved existence, and leads them to be—,, They ,, know not what, they know not where ,, —or what is worse, sinks them into ,, nothing! Yet even that nothing appears ,, terrible.” Such is the Sceptic's situation.

But to a soul fond of virtue, and secured by faith, time's swift wings give not a moment's anguish—The good wish to get rid of the incumbrance of clay, and the pains of mortality, they pant for a dissolution—time seems an enemy, who bars their speedy passage to that desirable felicity, which is only to be found in the regions of *bliss*.

The time I have past is nothing—it is now not mine—it is but a blank just stamped upon the memory.

Then let me prize what yet remains behind—let me learn foresight from past miscarriages, and rise to future virtues from former follies—may each revolving sun see me increase in wisdom, and shine on ripening virtues, till I am fitted for that state which is all purity.

I bow before my afflictions with resignation, and thank the bountiful Author of nature, for sending me such useful monitors.

„Virtue rejoice, tho' heaven may frown awhile,

That frown is but an earnest of a smile;
One day of tears presages years of joy,
Misfortunes only mend us, not destroy;
Who feel the lashes of an adverse hour,
Find them but means to waft them into
pow'r.”

May Heaven bless my friends and enemies, and give me peace of mind.

ELIZA.

† The above letter was either never answered, or the answer is lost.

L E T T E R XIII.

YORICK TO ELIZA.

MY DEAREST ELIZA!

I BEGAN a new journal this morning; you shall see it; for if I live not till your return to England, I will leave it you as a legacy. 'Tis a sorrowful page; but I will write chearful ones; and could I write letters to thee, they should be chearful ones too: but few, I fear, will reach thee! However, depend upon receiving something of the kind by every post; till then, thou wavest thy hand, and bidst me write no more.

Tell me how you are; and what sort of fortitude Heaven inspires you with. How are you accommodated, my dear? Is all right? Scribble away, any thing, and every thing to me. Depend upon seeing me at Deal, with the James's, should you be detained there by contrary winds.—Indeed, Eliza, I should with pleasure fly to you, could I be the means of rendering you any service, or doing you kind-

ness. Gracious and merciful God! consider the anguish of a poor girl.—Strengthen and preserve her in all the shocks her frame must be exposed to. She is now without a protector, but thee! Save her from all accidents of a dangerous element, and give her comfort at the last.

My prayer, Eliza, I hope, is heard; for the sky seems to smile upon me, as I look up to it. I am just returned from our dear Mrs. James's, where I have been talking of thee for three hours.—She has got your picture, and likes it: but Marriott, and some other judges, agree that mine is the better, and expressive of a sweeter character. But what is that to the original? yet I acknowledge that hers is a picture for the world, and mine is calculated only to please a very sincere friend, or sentimental philosopher.—In the one, you are dressed in smiles, and with all the advantages of silks, pearls, and ermine;—in the other, simple as a vestal—appearing the good girl Nature made you; which, to me, conveys an idea of more unaffected sweetness, than Mrs. Draper, habited for conquest in a birth-day suit,

with her countenance animated, and her dimples visible.—If I remember right, Eliza, you endeavoured to collect every charm of your person into your face, with more than *common* care, the day you sat for Mrs. James—Your colour too, brightened; and your eyes shone with more than usual brilliancy. I then requested you to come simple and unadorned when you sat for me—knowing, as I see with *unprejudiced* eyes, that you could receive no addition from the silk-worm's aid, or jeweller's polish. Let me now tell you a truth, which, I believe, I have uttered before.—When I first saw you, I beheld you as an object of compassion, and as a very plain woman. The mode of your dress, tho' fashionable, disfigured you.—But nothing now could render you such, but the being solicitous to make yourself admired as a handsome one—You are not handsome, Eliza, nor is yours a face that will please the tenth part of your beholders,—but are something more; for I scruple not to tell you, I never saw so intelligent, so animated, so good a countenance; nor was there, nor ever will be, that man of

sense, tenderness, and feeling, in your company three hours, that was not, or will not be, your admirer, or friend, in consequence of it; that is, if you assume, or assumed, no character foreign to your own, but appeared the artless being Nature designed you for. A something in your eyes, and voice, you possess in a degree more persuasive than any woman I ever saw, read, or heard of. But it is that bewitching sort of nameless excellence that men of nice sensibility alone can be touched with.

Were your husband in England, I would freely give him five hundred pounds, if money could purchase the acquisition, to let you only sit by me two hours in a day, while I wrote my Sentimental Journey. I am sure the work would sell so much the better for it, that I should be reimbursed the sum more than seven times told.—I would not give nine pence for the picture of you the Newnham's have got executed—It is the resemblance of a conceited, made-up coquette. Your eyes, and the shape of your face, the latter the most perfect oval I ever saw, which are

perfections that must strike the most indifferent judge, because they are equal to any of God's works in a similar way, and finer than any I beheld in all my travels, are manifestly injured by the affected leer of the one, and strange appearance of the other; owing to the attitude of the head, which is a proof of the artist's or your friend's false taste. The ****s, who verify the character I once gave, of teasing, or sticking like pitch, or bird-lime, sent a card that they would wait on Mrs. **** on Friday.—She sent back, she was engaged.—Then to meet at Ranelagh, to-night.—She answered, she did not go.—She says, if she allows the least footing, she never shall get rid of the acquaintance, which she is resolved to drop at once. She knows them. She knows they are not her friends, nor yours; and the first use they would make of being with her, would be to sacrifice you to her, if they could, a second time. Let her not then, let her not, my dear, be a greater friend to thee, than thou art to thyself. She begs I will reiterate my request to you, that you will not write to them. It

will give her, and thy Bramin, inexpressible pain. Be assured, all this is not without reason on her side. I have my reasons too; the first of which is, that I should grieve to excess, if Eliza wanted that fortitude her Yorick has built so high upon. I said I never more would mention the name to thee; and had I not received it, as a kind of charge, from a dear woman that loves you, I should not have broke my word. I will write again to-morrow to thee, thou best and most endearing of girls! A peaceful night to thee. My spirit will be with thee through every watch of it.

Adieu.

LETTER XIV.

ELIZA TO YORICK.

LET me see your journal; at least send a copy of it, before I leave England—for far, far off be the time destined for its descending to me as a legacy—I shall be happy to peruse the sorrowful pages, they humanize the heart—I feel as you felt, when I read what you pen—and that is to feel with the most refined sensibility.

The sympathy of Sentiments bestows the most inexpressible pleasures—such sorrows are sorrows to be coveted—when your page compels the tears from my eyes, and makes my heart throb—I will say, Here my Bramin wept—when he penned this passage, he wept—let me catch the pleasing contagion from each heart-felt sentence, and bedew the leaf with mutual streaming sorrows.—

—Then will I turn to the chearful effusions of thy imagination—then will I revel in the bright sallies of thy wit, and calm the pathetic perturbations of my soul with thy inimitable humour—the big tear shall no longer tremble in my eye—the tender anguish shall no longer heave my heart, but Yorick shall heal the sorrows the Bramin gave.

Such delectable amusements shall gild the tedious hours of my passage—and by Yorick's assistance, I shall fancy India but half the distance from England than it really is.

A kindly something you promise, by every post—then be assured I shall never wave my hand to stop the silent messenger, but with open arms receive it.

I am considerably better; and, thank heaven, am inspired with a fortitude, which I hope renders me worthy of the name of your disciple, of your friend.

My accommodations are tolerable—I cannot complain.

You say you shall see me at Deal with the James's, should I be detained there by contrary winds.

It has been my petition, ever since to the supreme Being, to interest the elements in my behalf, that I may once more be indulged with the sight of my friends.

Thus while the captain, the crew, and the other passengers, are wishing for a favourable gale, I am importuning the heavens to deny their prayer, and still to detain the vessel from her proceeding on her destined voyage.

I will not give my opinion concerning my resemblance on canvas, in the various styles, desired by my friends—I sat to oblige them—and would not on any account obtrude a dissenting fricture on their judgment.

But of this they may rest assured, that however the pictures may appear, the original is their's.

You say, when you first saw me, the mode of my dress, the fashionable, disfigured me.

I thought so myself—but wore it in compliance with the reigning taste—there is no pride so strong as that which is couched under an affected singularity.

Above all things, I would not wish to appear singular; that is, to be essentially absurd.

When I consider the distinguished friendship, with which you honour me, and reflect on that purity of affection which hath interested you in my most trivial concerns, and engaged you to devote your precious moments to my service—I cannot but glory in the compliment you pay me—in saying, „You are not handsome „Eliza—nor is yours a face that will please „a tenth part of your beholders.”

How happy am I not to owe your attachment to frail and fading beauty—but to sentiment alone.

The compliment is the strongest I ever in my life received, or wish to receive—it is not composed of common place flattery, nor paid to the simple features of a

face—it is genuine applause—it is paid to the head—to the heart.

Yet I must not indulge any vanity, so far as to take it in its full force to myself—you rather draw me as you are prejudiced in my favour, and partial to my defects.

Yet will I often look on my picture as finished by your hand—I am persuaded it is what I ought to be—I will strive to come up to the colouring, in order to be as perfect as my nature will admit, or perhaps as Providence designed I should be, during this sublunary probation.

You mention my husband, that dear name has made the tide of my blood ebbs tumultuously towards my heart—I turn my imagination towards India—sigh at the distance, and could almost unsay all that I have said in the former part of my letter.

But why should I revoke a single sentence, or wish to recall one sentiment—are not love and friendship equally sacred—then learn, Eliza, to keep them both inviolate—to be worthy of such a husband—such a friend!

Yes, my Yorick, my husband could

grant thee my company—if it could be of service to thee, whilst thou wast continuing thy sentimental journey—he would not deprive mankind of the improvement and pleasure thou art capable of giving them, by denying thee any thing.

Say no more of the ***s—I yield to your ardency—I give up every thing to your friendship—but quit the ungrateful subject—I will not write to them any more.

I shall impatiently expect your promised letter to-morrow.

Farewell, thou best of men, and sincerest friend—may Heaven protect thy busy hours, and guard thy more secluded moments,

Adieu.

Eight o'clock,

Morn.

LETTER XV.

ELIZA TO YORICK.

KIND YORICK,

I AM very happy in the company of Miss L—t, she is an amiable and deserving young lady.—I am thoroughly satisfied that she is to sail with me.

There is to be of the voyage a military officer in the company's service—He yesterday intruded upon us to tea—I did not chuse to shew any resentment. I rallied him, I told him, that boldness was certainly one of the principal requisites in a soldier.

He excused his incivility, without confessing it with a good grace.

He seems to be greatly taken with Miss L—t,—I dare engage that before we have sailed together the space of a fortnight, he will be in love with her.

The passengers I am to sail with are genteel people, and the officers behave with politeness and decorum.

My Yorick, my friend, divides my thoughts with the dear name that duty binds me to.—I often dream of you—remember me in your prayers—think of me waking, and let me like an illusion, steal through your fancy, while you sleep—I am yours—I am yours.

Adieu, adieu.

ELIZA.

P. S. As my stay will be so short at least in all probability, take every opportunity to me—adieu.

LETTER XVI.

YORICK TO ELIZA.

I THINK you could act no otherwise than you did with the young soldier. There was no shutting the door against him, either in politeness or humanity. Thou tellest me he seems susceptible of tender impressions; and that before Miss Light has sailed a fortnight, he will be in love with her.—Now I think it a thousand times more likely that he attaches himself to thee, Eliza; because thou art a thousand

times more amiable. Fivemonths with Eliza; and in the same room—and an amorous son of Mars besides!— „*It can* „*no be, masser.*” The sun, if he could avoid it, would not shine upon a dung-hill; but his rays are so pure, Eliza, and celestial,—I never heard that they were polluted by it.—Just such will thine be, dearest child, in this, and every such situation you will be exposed to, till thou art fixed for life.—But thy discretion, thy wisdom, thy honour, the spirit of thy Yorick, and thy own spirit, which is equal to it, will be thy ablest counsellors.

Surely, by this time, something is doing for thy accommodation.—But why may not clean washing and rubbing do, instead of painting your cabin, as it is to be hung? Paint is so pernicious, both to your nerves and lungs, and will keep you so much longer too, out of your apartment; where, I hope, you will pass some of your happiest hours.—

I fear the best of your shipmates are only genteel, by comparison with the contrasted crew, with which thou must behold them. So was—you know who!—

from the same fallacy that was put upon the judgment, when—but I will not mortify you. If they are decent, and distant, it is enough; and as much as is to be expected. If any of them are more, I rejoice;— thou wilt want every aid; and 'tis thy due to have them. Be cautious only, my dear, of intimacies. Good hearts are open, and fall naturally into them. Heaven inspire thine with fortitude, in this, and every deadly trial! Best of God's works, farewell! Love me, I beseech thee; and remember me for ever!

I am, my Eliza, and will ever be, in the most comprehensive sense,

Thy friend,

YORICK.

P. S. Probably you will have an opportunity of writing to me by some Dutch or French ship, or from the Cape de Verd Islands—it will reach me some how.—

LETTER XVII.

YORICK TO ELIZA.

MY DEAR ELIZA!

OH! I grieve for your cabin.—And the fresh painting will be enough to destroy every nerve about thee. Nothing so pernicious as white lead. Take care of yourself, dear girl; and sleep not in it too soon. It will be enough to give you a stroke of an epilepsy.

I hope you will have left the ship; and that my letters may meet, and greet you, as you get out of your post-chaise, at Deal.—When you have got them all, put them, my dear, into some order.—The first eight or nine, are numbered: but I wrote the rest without that direction to thee; but thou wilt find them out, by the day or hour, which, I hope, I have generally prefixed to them. When they are got together, in chronological order, sew them together under a cover. I trust they will be a perpetual refuge to thee, from time to time; and that thou wilt, when

weary of fools, and uninteresting discourse, retire, and converse an hour with them and me.

I have not had power, or the heart, to aim at enlivening any one of them, with a single stroke of wit or humour; but they contain something better; and what you will feel more suited to your situation—a long detail of much advice, truth, and knowledge. I hope, too, you will perceive loose touches of an honest heart, in every one of them; which speak more than the most studied periods; and will give thee more ground of trust and reliance upon Yorick, than all that labour-ed eloquence could supply. Lean then thy whole weight, Eliza, upon them and upon me. „ May poverty, distress, anguish, and shame, be my portion if ever I give thee reason to repent the knowledge of me.” — With this asseveration, made in the presence of a just God, I pray to him, that so it may speed with me as I deal candidly, and honourably with thee! I would not mislead thee, Eliza; I would not injure thee, in the opinion of a single individual, for the richest crown the proudest monarch wears.

Remember, that while I have life and power, whatever is mine, you may stile, and think, your's.—Though sorry should I be, if ever my friendship was put to the test thus, for your own delicacy's sake,—Money and counters are of equal use in my opinion, they both serve to set up with.

I hope you will answer me this letter; but if thou art debarred by the elements, which hurry thee away, I will write one for thee; and knowing it is such a one as thou wouldst have written, I will regard it as my Eliza's.

Honour, and happiness, and health, and comforts of every kind, sail along with thee, thou most worthy of girls! I will live for thee, and my Lydia—be rich for the dear children of my heart—gain wisdom, gain fame, and happiness, to share with them—with thee—and her, in my old age.—Once for all, adieu. Preserve thy life; steadily pursue the ends we proposed; and let nothing rob thee of those powers Heaven has given thee for thy well-being.

What can I add more, in the agitation

of mind I am in, and within five minutes of the last postman's bell, but recommend thee to Heaven, and recommend myself to Heaven with thee, in the same fervent ejaculation „that we may be happy, and meet again; if not in this world, in the next.”—Adieu,—I am thine, Eliza, affectionately, and everlastingly.

YORICK.

LETTER XVIII.

ELIZA TO YORICK.

MY YORICK,

I HOPE your fears, respecting my health, on account of my cabin being new painted, will prove groundless.—But as it will give my Yorick pleasure—I promise to take care of myself, particular care for his sake.

I have received your letters with heartfelt satisfaction—I received them, and have arranged them in chronological order, as you directed me—I found no difficulty in doing it, as the dates supplied any deficiency in the numbering.

I have put them under a cover—I will wear them next my heart—they shall, indeed, be my refuge—my kind silent monitors—I will peruse them with reverence, and obey them with respect—I have already treasured them in my memory, and experienced their efficacy.

While they are animated by knowledge and truth, thy honest heart appears in every line, and makes them glow with sensibility.—Mine reverberates to every sentence, and sympathizes with thine.—I return thy asseveration with equal sincerity, and imprecate the same wrath, if my candour is not equal to thine.

You say, „If thou art debarred by the „elements, which hurry thee away, I will „write one, a letter, for thee, and knowing it is such an one, as thou wouldst „have written—I will regard it as my „Eliza's.”

Do, my Yorick, when I have left the British shore—while I am combating the uncertainty of the boisterous elements—when I can no longer behold the white cliffs of thy native land, a land happy in thy birth, do write a letter for thy Eliza

—Stretch thy imagination to its utmost extent—fancy all that is tender, delicate, kind and pure—fancy the most seraphic affection, and believe the powers of thy imagination cannot exceed the dictates of my heart.

You ejaculate, „May we be happy, „and meet again—if not in this world, „in the next.”

I extend the petition, „May we again „meet, both here and hereafter.”

ELIZA.

LETTER XIX.

YORICK TO ELIZA.

I WISH to God, Eliza, it was possible to postpone the voyage to India, for another year.—For I am firmly persuaded within my own heart, that thy husband could never limit thee with regard to time.

I fear that Mr. B—has exaggerated matters.—I like not his countenance. It is absolutely killing.—Should evil befall thee, what will he not have to answer for? I know not the being that will be

deserving of so much pity; or that I shall hate more. He will be an outcast, alien—In which case I will be a father to thy children, my good girl!—therefore take no thought about them.—

But, Eliza, if thou art so very ill, still put off all thoughts of returning to India this year. — Write to your husband—tell him the truth of your case. — If he is the generous, humane man you describe him to be, he cannot but applaud your conduct.—I am credibly informed, that his repugnance to your living in England, arises only from the dread which has entered his brain, that thou mayst run him in debt, beyond thy appointments, and that he must discharge them—that such a creature should be sacrificed for the paltry consideration of a few hundreds is too, too hard! Oh! my child, that I could, with propriety indemnify him for every charge, even to the last mite, that thou hast been of to him! With joy would I give him my whole subsistence—nay, sequester my livings, and trust the treasures Heaven has furnished my head with, for a future subsistence.—

You owe much, I allow, to your husband, — you owe something to appearances, and the opinion of the world; but, trust me, my dear, you owe much likewise to yourself. — Return therefore, from Deal, if you continue ill. — I will prescribe for you, gratis. — You are not the first woman, by many, I have done so for, with success. I will send for my wife and daughter, and they shall carry you, in pursuit of health, to Montpellier, the wells of Brancais, the Spa, or whither thou wilt. Thou shalt direct them, and make parties of pleasure in what corner of the world fancy points out to thee. We shall fish upon the banks of Arno, and lose ourselves in the sweet labyrinths of its vallies. — And then thou shouldst warble to us, as I have once or twice heard thee. — „I'm lost, I'm lost” — but we should find thee again, my Eliza. — Of a similar nature to this, was your physician's prescription: „Use gentle exercise, the pure southern air of France, or milder Naples — with the society of friendly gentle beings.” Sensible man! He certainly entered into your feelings. He knew

the fallacy of medicine to a creature, whose ILLNESS HAS ARISEN FROM THE AFFLICTION OF HER MIND. Time only, my dear, I fear you must trust to, and have your reliance on; may it give you the health so enthusiastic a votary to the charming goddess deserves.

I honour you, Eliza, for keeping secret some things, which if explained, had been a panegyric on yourself. There is a dignity in venerable affliction, which will not allow it to appeal to the world for pity, or redress. Well have you supported that character, my amiable; philosophic friend! And, indeed, I begin to think you have as many virtues as my uncle Toby's widow.—I don't mean to insinuate, hussy, that *my* opinion is no better founded than his was of Mrs. Wadman; nor do I conceive it possible for any *Trim* to convince me it is equally fallacious.—I am sure, while I have my reason, it is not.—Talking of widows—pray, Eliza, if ever you are such, do not think of giving yourself to some wealthy Nabob—because I design to marry you myself.—My wife cannot live long—she has sold all the provinces

in France already—and I know not the woman I should like so well for her substitute as yourself.—'Tis true, I am ninety-five in constitution, and you but twenty-five—rather too great a disparity this!—but what I want in youth, I will make up in wit and good-humour.—Not Swift so loved his Stella, Scarron his Maintenon, or Waller his Sacharissa, as I will love, and sing thee, my wife elect! All those names, eminent as they were, shall give place to thine, Eliza. Tell me in answer to this, that you approve and honour the proposal, and that you would, like the Spectator's mistress, have more joy in putting on an old man's slipper than associating with the gay, the voluptuous, and the young.—Adieu, my Simplicia!

Yours,

TRISTRAM.

LETTER XX.

ELIZA TO YORICK.

MY TRISTRAM,

I WOULD oblige you in any thing practicable—with any thing within the line of my duty;—but it is impossible to postpone my voyage—my orders are irrevocable—I must submit.

Mr. B—did not exaggerate—but I am better—my children I therefore hope will not be orphans—but I thank thee, however, for the generosity of thy idea concerning them—it was exalted.

Indeed you have been misinformed concerning my husbands temper—he is not of that parsimonious disposition which you imagine.—If my expences only were in question, I might continue to breathe the air of Europe—but more tender considerations urge him to press my return to India—I am not made a pecuniary sacrifice.

You allow I owe much to my husband—I follow but the dictates of my duty to discharge that debt—the most sacred debt

of which we know, and contracted in the most solemn manner.

I confess much is due to appearances, and the opinion of the world, yet not to wrong those appearances, and that opinion—not to take from what is due to myself, I would, if circumstances permitted, I would, indeed, turn from Deal to pay what is due to friendship.

You should prescribe for me—but not corporeally—let those do it whose business it is—let them have their perquisites, and fatten on the anguish of the valetudinary, while my Yorick assumed to himself the nobler task of prescribing to the mind, and eradicating the disorders of the soul—that is the task he can perform unrivaled, and for which Heaven peculiarly designed him, and lent his talents to benefit an unfeeling—a depraved world.

May thy wife and daughters be better employed, than in administering to the anguish of thy Indian—may they be the means and partakers of thy domestic happiness—if they felt as I feel, they would think every toil a pleasure which gave thee comfort.

I cannot think, let physicians prescribe as they please, that change of place could relieve me—I have tried it from one side of the globe to the other, without success—therefore Britain, and thy converse would certainly prove as efficacious, as the air of France and Naples—but my continuance here will be impossible.

Anguish of mind, as you justly intimate, perhaps, proceeding from too great a degree of sensibility, and being constitutionally ailing, will, in my case, baffle the prescriptions of art and the experience of the most able physicians.

You say, „There is a dignity in venerable affliction, which will not allow it, to appeal to the world for pity or redress.” — You speak from my heart, you have taken my sentiment—oh! may I never be compelled to seek redress from the world, or be so unfortunate as to merit indiscriminate pity.

If I am pitied—let it be by thee!—Yet I would not wish thee to pity any thing.

Thy worthy heart is so tender, that I am sensible, shouldst thou have occasion to pity any one, that thy anguish would

be more severe than that felt by the object of thy sensibility.—I would wish none but the flinty breasted to feel pity, and they are incapable of it.

But you grow merry—you ask, If ever I should become a widow, Heaven avert the hour! whether I would marry again? Whether I would give my hand to some rich Nabob.

I think I never should give my hand again—as I am afraid my heart would not go with it.— —But as to Nabobs, I despise them all—those who pretend to be Christians, I mean.

Have they not depopulated towns—laid waste villages, and desolated the plains of my native country?— —Alas! they have fertilized the immense fields of India, with the blood of its inhabitants—they have sacrificed the lives of millions of my countrymen to their insatiable avarice—rivers of blood stream for vengeance against them—widows and orphans supplicate Heaven for revenge.

Then can those spirits, who have waded through blood, to gain riches and power, be congenial with the soul of Eliza, —

could Yorick's hapless Indian bear the idea of an union with the murderers of her countrymen—no—shame and poverty be first my portion.

Riches, as the origin of luxury, and support of the gaudy trappings of pride, I condemn.—Gold is beneficial only in the hands of virtue, when the benevolent hand is extended to petitionary distress—or when soft-eyed humanity seeks the cottage of affliction to

„Shine its superfluity away”—
to diffuse its blessings around, and bid the big tear of joy start from the eye of sorrow, and trickle down the woe-wan cheeks that begin to glow with the warmth of gratitude.

Yes, my Bramin, were I a widow—and thou a widower—I think I would give my hand to thee, preferable to any man existing—I would unite in the purity of heart, with my monitor—I would wed thy soul—my mind should adopt thy sentiments, and become congenial with thy own, and

„ My rough genius should at length refine,
Acquiring worth by imitating thine;
With thee I'd wander o'r the historic page,
And view the changing scenes of every age.
Or led by thee, the latest tracts explore
Of grave philosophy's extensive lore;
Or now reclin'd in the Sylvan bow'r,
With peaceful bards, enjoy the blissful
hour.”

What matter disparity of years, respecting the mortal part? The soul, that ray of immortality, is always young; and I am certain, thy soul is more vigorous than what the generality of mankind can boast.

If any part of thee is old, it is the most insignificant.—The most valuable part is in all the vernal bloom of youthful prime.

A great poet says,

„ For love no certain cause can be assign'd,
„ 'Tis in no face, but in the lover's mind.”

And may not I improve the idea—may not I say,

Why should one thought on years unequal
waste,

Love's not in age, but in the lover's taste;
If time towards the grave the body bring,
The soul shines forth in all the charms of
spring.

Then let not frail corruption touch my
heart,

I claim the soul, and love th'immortal part.

But rhapsody aside—I hope Mrs. Sterne will out-live every idea of such an union.—You say, She has sold all the provinces in France—I am glad of it—that she may the sooner purchase the fee simple of her health in her native air.

However, I honour thy slipper, and really prefer it to any association with the gay, the voluptuous, and the young—but I would not have Mrs. Sterne put it off too soon, for the sake of thy domestic happiness.

Without joking, I am seriously, and with sincerity, in the utmost purity of affection, thine most unalterably,

ELIZA.

P. S. My heart will beat with impatience for an answer—be expeditious to ease its throbbings.

L E T T E R XXI.

YORICK TO ELIZA.

MY DEAR ELIZA!

I HAVE been within the verge of the gates of Death.—I was ill the last time I wrote to you; and apprehensive of what would be the consequence.—My fears were but too well founded; for in ten minutes after I dispatched my letter, this poor, fine-spun frame of Yorick's gave way, and I broke a vessel in my breast, and could not stop the loss of blood till four this morning. I have filled all thy India handkerchiefs with it.—It came, I think, from my heart! I fell asleep, through weakness. At six I awoke, with the bosom of my shirt steeped in tears. I dreamt I was sitting under the canopy of Indolence, and that thou camest into the room, with a shawl in thy hand, and toldst me, my spirit had flown to thee in the Downs, with tidings of my fate; and that you were come to administer what consolation filial affection could bestow, and to receive my

parting breath and blessing.—With that you folded the shawl about my waist, and, kneeling, supplicated my attention. I awoke; but in what a frame! Oh! my God! „But thou wilt number my tears, and put them all into thy bottle.”—Dear girl! I see thee,—thou art for ever present to my fancy, embracing my feeble knees, and raising thy fine eyes to bid me be of comfort: and when I talk to Lydia, the words of Esau, as uttered by thee, perpetually ring in my ears—„Bless me even also, my father!”—Blessing attend thee, thou child of my heart!

My bleeding is quite stopped, and I feel the principle of life strong within me: so be not alarmed, Eliza—I know I shall do well. I have eat my breakfast with hunger; and I write to thee with a pleasure arising from that prophetic impression in my imagination, that „all will terminate to our heart's content.” Comfort thyself eternally with this persuasion, „that the best of beings, as thou hast sweetly expressed it, could not, by a combination of accidents, produce such a chain of events, merely to be the source of misery

to the leading person engaged in them." The observation was very applicable, very good, and very elegantly expressed. I wish my memory did justice to the wording of it.—Who taught you the art of writing so sweetly, Eliza?—You have absolutely exalted it to a science! When I am in want of ready cash, and ill health will permit my genius to exert itself, I shall print your letters, as finished essays, „by an unfortunate Indian lady." The style is new; and would almost be a sufficient recommendation for their selling well, without merit—but their sense, natural ease, and spirit, is not to be equalled, I believe, in this section of the globe; nor, I will answer, for it, by any of your country-women in your's.—I have shewed your letter to Mrs. B—, and to half the literati in town.—You shall not be angry with me for it, because I meant to do you honour by it.—You cannot imagine how many admirers your epistolary productions have gained you, that never viewed your external merits. I only wonder where thou couldst acquire thy graces, thy goodness, thy accomplishments—so

connected! so educated! Nature has, surely, studied to make thee her peculiar care—for thou art, and not in my eyes alone, the best and fairest of all her works.—

And so, this is the last letter thou art to receive from me; because the Earl of Chatham, I read in the papers, is got to the Downs*; and the wind, I find, is fair. If so—blessed woman! take my last, last farewell!—Cherish the remembrance of me; think how I esteem, nay, how affectionately I love thee, and what a prize I set upon thee! Adieu, adieu! and with my adieu—let me give thee one freight rule of conduct, that thou hast heard from my lips in a thousand forms—but I center it in one word,

REVERENCE THYSELF.

Adieu, once more, Eliza! May no anguish of heart plant a wrinkle upon thy face, till I behold it again! May no doubts or misgivings disturb the serenity of thy mind, or awaken a painful thought about

* April 7, 1767.

thy children—for they are Yorick's—and Yorick is thy friend for ever!—Adieu, adieu, adieu!

P. S. Remember, that Hope shortens all journies, by sweetening them;—so sing my little stanza on the subject, with the devotion of an hymn, every morning when thou arisest, and thou wilt eat thy breakfast with more comfort for it.

Blessings, rest, and Hygeia go with thee! Mayst thou soon return, in peace and affluence, to illumine my night! I am, and shall be, the last to deplore thy loss, and will be the first to congratulate, and hail thy return.—

FARE THEE WELL!

LETTER XXII.

ELIZA TO YORICK.

MY BRAMIN,

THIS is the last letter thou wilt receive from me, while I am within sight of the British shore—the land of freedom, and

benevolence—the land which, to its own glory be it spoken, gave my Yorick being.

I was terrified when I opened your last letter;—your illness gave me the most genuine concern.

To break a blood vessel in thy breast—dreadful!—I was alarmed at the intelligence, and my blood thrilled in my veins, and curdled near my heart, when I read it.

O that my India handkerchiefs had been slyptic, to give thee ease.—I was happy to read you had slept—but your dream—Heaven render it improphetic—Heaven keep me from the painful office of administering to your dissolution.

Thy tears I will treasure in my bottle, or at least, I will weep for thee—fill it with my tears, and call them thine, as they are unfeignedly shed upon thy account.

Your imagination images to my feelings—you behold me in fancy in the very supplicating posture I should assume, were I near you—I should embrace! embrace! your knees, and look as if I bade you be of comfort—for I should only look—I should be unable to speak.

I join with thee in blessing the child of thy heart—thy Lydia.

And all praise be given to that bountiful Being, who has healed thy disorder, and stopped thy bleeding—who bade thee again „feel the principle of life strong „within thee.”

All will certainly terminate to our heart's content—to think otherwise, is to entertain an ill opinion of an omnipotent Being—who is all wise—all merciful, and all good, whose benignity is equal to his power, and both are unbounded.

You may inquire, who taught me the art of writing—it was even my Yorick!—if I have any claim to merit—if my style is, as you are pleased to say, new—if the ease and spirit of my compositions are not to be equalled—the praise is entirely due to yourself.

I have taken the utmost pains to steal your sentiments—your manner—the delicacy of your expressions—the easy flow of your thoughts—the purity of your diction—in fine, I have in my writings aimed as much as possible to be Yorick.

But I cannot think my style equal to what your prejudice in my favour persuades you it is;—I can perceive manifest faults in my compositions myself. I am not laying a trap for future plaudits, indeed I am not.—I beg that our correspondence may be from the heart, not of the heart;—therefore no compliments.

I must, however, chide—I must, my Yorick,—for shewing my letters.—You tell me, you have shewn them to Mrs. B—, and to half the literati in town;—indeed you have been to blame—so to expose your Eliza's weakness.

She bares her heart to thee—she lays it entirely open—but she would not have it shewn so naked to every one in the fulness of her sincerity.—Many things may slip from her unsuspecting pen, which she would not have known to any one, who could not, like thee, make great allowances in her favour—and pardon the weakness of her nature.

You say, „You cannot imagine how „many admirers your epistolary productions have gained you.”

False flattery!—Their encomiums are illusive—it is to you their compliments are paid—they find you are blind to my errors—they perceive you implicitly admire all that comes from me—they pretend to coincide with your opinion, not to give you any uneasiness—they admire—they reverence you—they will not mortify you, by declaring that any being you are pleased to think perfect, is not so.

It is the respect due to the merits of my Yorick, that occasions the many compliments paid to the trifling deserts of his Eliza.

We are in the Downs—the wind is fair—we shall sail this evening—the captain has just informed me so—I therefore took this opportunity to pour the effusions of my heart to thee in haste.

Farewell, worthiest of men—feeling being, thou art all sentiment—farewell—I will—I will cherish the remembrance of thee!—You tell me how you esteem me—how affectionately you love me—what a prize you set upon me.

I esteem thee with equal ardour—I love thee with equal affection—I prize thee as

ardently—let me be ever dear to thy heart
—and an inhabitant of thy memory.

I will reverence myself for my Yorick's
fake—I will, my Yorick, who is my friend
for ever.

I will sing thy little stanza to Hope in
my matin and evening orisons—yet I can-
not help deploring our separation.

Farewell, my Bramin— my faithful mo-
nitor, Farewell.

May prosperity attend thee, and peace
crown thy days with felicity.

Thine affectionately,

Thine everlastingly,

Adieu, adieu, adieu,

ELIZA.

P. S. I will, if possible, write by some
ship bound to England.

STERNE's LETTERS

TO

HIS FRIENDS.

PUBLISHED BY

AN ANONYMOUS EDITOR

IN M. DCC. LXXV.

STILLER LETTERS

HIS FRIENDS

BY

AN ANONYMOUS EDITOR

THE NEW YORK

PUBLISHERS

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LETTER I*.

TO *****.

— I HAVE been much concerned at your overthrow; but our roads are ill contrived for the airy vehicles now in fashion. May it be the last fall you ever meet with in this world!—But this reflection costs me a deep sigh — and I fear, my friend, you will get over it no cheaper—Many, many are the ups and downs of life, and fortune must be uncommonly gracious to that mortal who does not experience a great variety of them;—though perhaps to these may be owing as much of our

* The first and fifth Letters of this Collection are omitted, having been already inserted amongst those published by Mrs. MEDALLE. See Vol. I. LETTER LIX. p. 150; and LETTER LXXIX. p. 183.

pleasures as our pains: there are scenes of delight in the vale as well as on the mountain; and the inequalities of nature may not be less necessary to please the eye—than the varieties of life to improve the heart. At best we are but a short-sighted race of beings, with just light enough to discern our way—To do that is our duty, and should be our care! When a man has done this, he is safe, the rest is of little consequence.—

*Cover his head with a turf or a stone,
It is all one, it is all one!*

—I visit my abbey, as usual, every evening—Amid the mouldering ruins of ancient greatness I take my solitary walk; far removed from the noise and bustle of a malicious world, I can cherish the fond remembrance of my *Cordelia*.—*Cordelia*, thou wert kind, gentle, and beautiful! Thy beauties, rather let me say thy misfortunes, first raised the flame of tender affection in my breast!—But thy beauties and thy misfortunes are passed away together; and all that charmed mankind,

and delighted me, become a clod of the valley!—Here, my *Cordelia*, I will weed clean thy grave—I will stretch myself upon it—will wet it with my tears—and the traveller shall not turn aside to observe me.—

But whither am I led? Do, my kind friend, excuse the wanderings of my pen; it governs me, I govern not it—Farewel; and receive the warmest affection of

L. STERNE.

LETTER II.

TO *****.

—**I** FEAR that ere this you may have oftentimes accused me of negligence, in not answering your last letters; but you addressed them to me in London, and I was dying in the country.—I have been more sorely afflicted this last time than I ever was before: had I followed the advice of the faculty, it had been over with me; and, contrary to their opinion, I ventured to order myself a stout bleeding.—This, in all probability, saved me; for

how long God only knows!—I am still weak, and can hardly make myself heard across the table.—My spirits, the best friends I ever had in this world, stuck close by me in this last conflict: by their kind assistance I have been able to bear the heavy load of life, and walk so merrily along the wilderness of this world.—Thanks to them, I have been able to whistle and sing in its most uncheery paths!—As it has pleased heaven to let them accompany me thus far on my journey, I hope and trust they will not be suffered to leave me now that I am almost at the end of it.—I know and feel (my friend) that this last sentiment will give you pain!—This, believe me, is most foreign to my wishes; but I have always writ from my heart—and supposing it to be my practice to cheat the world, I have ever considered the character of a friend too respectable to make the sport of an idle imagination. To deceive is a base trade at best;—but to deceive those we love and value, is a folly so totally inexcusable, that I defy all the arts of sophistry to frame an argument in its favour.—When I open my

heart—I shew all its follies—its caprices—its wantonness—its virtues are all exposed to view! and though by this means I lay myself open to the illiberal and the ill-natured, who are ever ready to seize the opportunity of gratifying their dirty passions;—and withal are so numerous, that hypocrisy, with respect to them, is accounted a virtue—but *I shew all!*—This may be imprudent—and I am told by some sentimental prudes—that it is indecent;—if so, let them put their fans before their faces, or walk on the other side of the way.—Disguise is the fashion; and the man who does not use it is called a Libertine: for my part—I hate a mask, and will never wear one! I am not ashamed of my failings, while I feel that I have some little stock of virtue to counterbalance them.——The man who hides nothing, who varnishes nothing, when applause, when honour comes, and come it must to such, finds no busy something in his breast that gives the lie to it.—’Tis his own, and his heart will answer it.—Of all sycophants, scourge me those who flatter themselves! ——He who speaks peace to himself when

there is no peace, is acting a part he cannot long support—The scene closes—the curtain drops—and he is himself again. The follies, the errors of mankind I sincerely forgive, as I hope to be forgiven;—and when a man has mounted on his hobby-horse, let him amble, or trot, or gallop, so he will be quiet, and not let his heart do mischief—God speed him!—And if I feel inclination to put on my fool's cap, and jingle the bells for two or three hours of the four-and-twenty—or the whole twenty-four hours together—what is that to any one?—O, Sir, you will be called trifling, foolish, etc. etc.—With all my heart!—Pray, good folks, fall on—never spare!—Fair ladies, have you got your bellies full?—If so, much good may it do you!—But, Sir, we must prove you to be a rogue, a rascal, an hypocrite.—Alas! I have nothing to give you but my fool's cap and my hobby-horse—If they are not sufficient, I must beg leave to recommend you to that pale-faced, solemn, stiff-starched figure who is this moment entering that church; fall upon him;—and for once in your lives, perhaps, you may hit the mark.

I fear, my good friend, you will begin to think, that however my speaking faculties are obstructed, that one of writing still remains free and large—But here is the grief—it is but writing!—My pen is a leaden one, and it is with some difficulty I trail it on to assure you of my being most cordially

Yours,

L. STERNE.

LETTER III.

TO ———.

I HAVE not been a furlong from Shandy-hall since I wrote to you last—but why is my pen so perverse?—I have been to—, and my errand was of so peculiar a nature, that I must give you an account of it.—You will scarce believe me when I tell you, it was to out-juggle a juggling attorney; to put craft, and all its power, to defiance; and to obtain justice from one—who has a heart soul enough to take advantage of the mistakes of honest sim-

plicity, and who has raised a considerable fortune by artifice and injustice. However, I gained my point!—It was a star and garter to me!—The matter was as follows:

„A poor man, the father of my Vestal,
„having by the sweat of his brow, during a course of many laborious years,
„saved a small sum of money, applied to
„this scribe to put it out to use for him:
„this was done, and a bond given for
„the money.—The honest man, having
„no place in his cottage which he thought
„sufficiently secure, put it in a hole in
„the thatch, which had served instead of
„a strong box to keep his money.—In
„this situation the bond remained till the
„time of receiving the interest drew nigh.
„—But alas!—the rain which had done
„no mischief to his gold, had found out
„his paper security, and had rotted it to
„pieces!”—It would be a difficult matter
to paint the distress of the old country-
man upon this discovery;—he came to
me weeping, and begging my advice and
assistance!—It cut me to the heart!

Frame to yourself the picture of a man

upwards of sixty years of age—who having with much penury and more toil, with the addition of a small legacy, scraped together about fourscore pounds to support him in the infirmities of old age, and to be a little portion for his child when he should be dead and gone—lost his little hoard at once! and to aggravate his misfortune, through his own neglect and incaution.—, If I was young, Sir, (said he) , my affliction would have been light—, and I might have obtained it again;—, but I have lost my comfort when I most , wanted it!—My staff is taken from me , when I cannot go alone; and I have , nothing to expect, in future life, but , the unwilling charity of a Parish Officer.”—Never, in my whole life, did I wish to be rich, with so good a grace, as at this time!—What a luxury it would have been to have said to this afflicted fellow-creature, —, There is thy money , —go thy ways—and be at peace.”—But alas! the Shandy family were never much encumbered with money; and I (the poorest of them all) could only assist him with good counsel:—but I did not stop here.—

I went myself with him to——, where by persuation, threats, and some art, which (by the bye) in such a cause, and with such an opponent, was very justifiable—I sent my poor client back to his home, with his comfort and his bond restored to him.—Bravo!—Bravo!

If a man has a right to be proud of any thing,—it is of a good action, done as it ought to be, without any base interest lurking at the bottom of it.—Adieu—Adieu—

L. STERNE.

LETTER IV.

TO MRS. V.

OF the two bad cassocks, fair Lady, which I am worth in the world, I would this moment freely give the latter of them to find out by what irresistible force of magic it is that I am influenced to write a letter to you upon so short an acquaintance.—Short did I say?—I unsay it again—I have been acquainted with Mrs. V——

this long and many a day: for, surely, the most penetrating of her sex need not be told, that intercourses of this kind are not to be dated by hours, days, or months—but by the slow or rapid progress of our intimacies, which are measured only by the degrees of penetration by which we discover characters at once—or by the openness and frankness of heart which lets the observer into it without the pains of reflection. Either of these spares us what a short life could ill afford—and that is the long and unconscionable time in forming connexions, which had much better be spent in tasting the sweets of them.—Now of this frame and contexture is the fair Mrs. V——; her character is to be read at once—I saw it before I had walked twenty paces beside her—I believe in my conscience, dear Lady, if truth was known, *that you have no inside at all.*

That you are graceful, elegant, and desirable, etc. etc.—every common beholder who can stare at you, as a Dutch boor does at the Queen of Shaba,—can easily find out;—but that you are sensible, gentle and tender, and from one end to

the other of you full of the sweetest tones and modulations, requires a deeper research.—You are a system of harmonic vibrations—the softest and best attuned of all instruments.—Lord! I would give away my other cassock to touch you—But in giving my last rag of priesthood for that pleasure, I should be left naked—to say nothing of being quite *disordered*—So divine a hand as your's would presently put me into *orders* again—but if you suppose this would leave me as you found me, believe me, dear Mrs. V——, you are much mistaken.—All this being duly put together, pray, dear Lady, let me ask you, what business you had to come here from ——? or, to speak more to the purpose, what business have you to return back again?—The deuce take you with your musical and other powers! Could nothing serve you, but you must turn *Tristram Shandy's* head, as if it was not turned enough already—As for your turning my heart—I forgive you, as you have been so good as to turn it towards so excellent and heavenly an object.—

Now, dear Mrs. V—, if you can help it, do not think of *yourself*—

But believe me to be,

With the highest esteem

For your character and self,

Your's,

L. STERNE.

L E T T E R V.

FROM DR. EUSTACE IN AMERICA, TO
THE REV. MR. STERNE, WITH A
WALKING-STICK.

S I R!

WHEN I assure you that I am a great admirer of Trifram Shandy, and have, ever since his introduction into the world, been one of his most zealous defenders against the repeated assaults of prejudice and misapprehension, I hope you will not treat this unexpected appearance in his company as an intrusion.

You know it is an observation as remarkable for its truth as for its antiquity, that a similitude of sentiments is the general parent of friendship.—It cannot be

wondered at, that I should conceive an esteem for a person whom Nature had most indulgently enabled to frisk and curvet with ease through all those intricacies of sentiment, which from irresistible propensity she had impelled me to trudge through without merit or distinction.

The only reason that gave rise to this address to you, is my accidentally having met with a piece of true Shandeyan flattery, I mean according to vulgar opinion, for to such judges both appear equally destitute of regularity or design.—It was made by a very ingenious gentleman of this province, and presented to the late Governor Dobbs. After his death Mrs. D. gave it me: its singularity made many desirous of procuring it; but I had resolved, at first, not to part with it, till, upon reflection, I thought it would be a very proper and probably not an unacceptable compliment to my favourite author, and in his hands might prove as ample a field for meditation as a button-hole or a broomstick.

I have the honour to be, &c. &c.

LETTER VI.

MR. STERNE'S ANSWER.

SIR,

London, Feb. 9, 1768.

I THIS moment received your obliging Shandeyan piece of sculpture along with it, of both which testimonies of your regard I have the justest sense, and return you, dear Sir, my best thanks and acknowledgment. Your walking-stick is in no sense more Shandaick than in that of its having more handles than one: the parallel breaks only in this, that in using the stick every one will take the handle which suits his convenience. In Trifram Shandy the handle is taken which suits the passions, their ignorance or their sensibility. There is so little true feeling in the herd of the world, that I wish I could have got an act of parliament, when the books first appeared, that none but wise men should look into them. It is too much to write books, and find heads to understand them; the world, however, seems to come into

a better temper about them, the people of genius here being to a man on its side; and the reception it has met with in France, Italy, and Germany, has engaged one part of the world to give it a second reading. The other, in order to be on the strongest side, has at length agreed to speak well of it too. A few hypocrites and Tartuffes, whose approbation could do it nothing but dishonour, remain unconverted.

I am very proud, Sir, to have had a man like you on my side from the beginning; but it is not in the power of every one to taste humour, however he may wish it; it is the gift of God: and, besides, a true feeler always brings half the entertainment along with him; his own ideas are only called forth by what he reads, and the vibrations within him entirely correspond with those excited.—'Tis like reading himself and not the book.

In a week's time I shall be delivered of two volumes of the Sentimental Travels of Mr. Yorick through France and Italy; but, alas! the ship sails three days too soon, and I have but to lament it deprives me of the pleasure of presenting them to you,

Believe me, dear Sir, with great thanks
for the honour you have done me, with
true esteem,

Your obliged humble servant,

L. STERNE.

LETTER VII.

TO ———.

IT is even as you told me, my good
friend,—a beckon from an old female ac-
quaintance has led me a dance to——.

It was too great a temptation to be thrown
in the way of such a sinner;—so I have
bid adieu to Shandy Hall till the beginning
of October—which, by the bye, is one
of the finest months in the year in this part
of the kingdom——This is added, by the
way, to induce you to return to me at
that time: if you cannot, let me know
where you are to be the beginning of the
following month, and the wheels of my
chariot shall roll rapidly towards you.

I have not been quite idle since you left
me, but, amidst a thousand impediments,
have snatched one volume more for a gouty

and splenetic world. I suppose this will overtake you at the Hot-Wells, as you are walking a sentimental foot-pace beside the phthifical nymph of the fountain—If so—protect and cherish her, whosoever she be; and tell her, that she has *Trifram Shandy's* wishes for her recovery and happiness.—Had I lived in days of yore, when virtue and sentiment bore a price, I should have been the most peerless knight of them all!—Some tender-hearted damsel in distress would ever have been my object:—to wipe away the tears from off the cheek of such a friendless fair-one, I would go to *Mecca*—and for a friend—to the end of the world.—

In this last sentiment my best friend was uppermost in my thoughts!

But wherefore do I think of arms and *Dulcineas*,—when, alas, my spear is grown rusty, and is fit only to be hung in the old family-hall, among pistols without *cocks*, and helmets that have lost their vizards.

As for my health, which you so kindly inquire after—I cannot brag of it—it is not so well with me this year as it was the

last—and I fear I have little on my side but laughter and good spirits! These have stood me in great stead for twenty years past: how long they may be able to keep the field, and prolong the combat—for at best it is but prolonging a contest which must at last end in their defeat—I know not!—Nevertheless, for the days that are past, as well as those which are to come I will eat my bread in peace: and be it but bread and water, and I have such a friend as you, I will find a way, somehow or other, to make merry over it.

Adieu,

L. STERNE.

LETTER VIII.

TO —.

I SNATCH half an hour, while my dinner is getting ready, to tell you I am thus far on my way to Shandy Hall:—two more stages, and I shall be at the end of a tedious journey.—Report, for the fourth time, has numbered me with dead;—and it was generally believed in this part of

the world, that my bones were laid in classic ground.—This I do not much wonder at—for, to make the best of it, my constitution is but a scurvy one, and to keep the machine a going a little longer, has been the only motive for my running away from my friends and my country so much as I have done of late;—though weak as it is, it has somehow or other weathered more storms than many a stouter one has been able to do;—could I but transform myself into a bird of passage, and go and come with the summer—I think I should give the lie to a few more reports of this nature—before I am called in good earnest to make a report of myself and all my actions to the Being who made me.

The book of engravings which I left with you, I must recommend to your care for a few weeks longer:—nay,—if you think they are worthy of your acceptance—keep them for ever!—for to tell you the truth, I have now no occasion for them.—This is rather an ungracious way of making an offering, but you will excuse me when I tell you,—that the dear young lady at whose feet I intended to lay them

down, and for whose sake I had preserved them with so much care, is gone to that country from whence no one returns.—Genius, —wit, —beauty, —goodness—all, all were united in her!—every virtue, —every grace!—I could write for ever on such a theme—but I must have done.

Surely the pleasures which arise from contemplating such characters, —embracing the urn which contains their ashes, —and shedding the tears of friendship over it—are far, far superior to the highest joys of sense—or sensuality.

If you do not like the last word, —I pray you be so kind as to scratch it out; —for that is a liberty I have never yet ventured to take myself with any thing I write.

Adieu, —Adieu!

Yours most truly,

L. STERNE.

LETTER IX.

TO ———.

—I BEHELD her tender look—her pathetic eye petrified my fluids— —the

liquid dissolution drowned those once-bright orbs—the late sympathetic features, so pleasing in their harmony, are now blasted—withered—and are dead;—her charms are dwindled into a melancholy which demands my pity.—Yes—my friend—our once sprightly and vivacious Harriot is that very object that must thrill your soul.—How abandoned is that heart which bulges the tear of innocence, and is the cause, the fatal cause of overwhelming the spotless soul, and plunging the yet-untainted mind into a sea of sorrow and repentance. Though born to protect the fair, does not man act the part of a Demon?—first alluring by his temptations, and then triumphing in his victory—When villainy gets the ascendancy, it seldom leaves the wretch 'till it has thoroughly polluted him.—T—, once the joyous companion of our juvenile extravagances, by a deep-laid scheme so far ingratiated himself into the good graces of the old man—that even he, with all his penetration and experience, (on which old folks generally pique themselves) could not perceive his drift, and, like the goodness of his own

heart, believed him honourable.—Had I known his pretensions—I would have flown on the wings of friendship—of regard—of affection—and rescued the lovely innocent from the hands of the spoiler.—Be not alarmed at my declaration—I have been long bound to her in the reciprocal bonds of affection;—but it is of a more delicate stamp than the gross materials nature has planted in us for procreation—I hope ever to retain the idea of innocence and love her still: I would love the whole sex were they equally deserving.

— — — — — taking her by the hand—the other thrown round her waist—after an intimacy allowing such freedoms—with a look deceitfully pleasing, the villain poured out a torrent of protestations—and—though oaths are sacred—swore with all the fortitude of a conscientious man—the depth of his love—the height of his esteem—the strength of his attachment;—by these and other artful means to answer his abandoned purpose—(for which you know he is but too well qualified)—gained on the open inexperienced heart of the generous Harriot, and robbed her of her brightest

jewel.—Oh, England! where are your senators?—where are your laws?—Ye Heavens! where rests your deadly thunder?—why are your bolts restrained from o'erwhelming with vengeance this vile seducer.—I,—my friend,—I was the minister sent by justice to revenge her wrongs—revenge?—I disclaim it—to redress her wrongs.—The news of affliction flies—I heard it, and posted to ****, where forgetting my character—this is the style of the enthusiast—it most became my character—I saw him in his retreat—I flew out of the chaise—caught him by the collar—and in a tumult of passion—demanded—sure, if anger is excusable, it must be when it is excited by a detestation of vice—I demanded him to restore—alas! what was not in his power to return.—Vengeance!—and shall these vermin—these spoilers of the fair—these murderers of the mind—lurk and creep about in dens, secure to themselves and pillage all around them?—Distracted with my rage—I charged him with his crime—exploded his baseness—condemned his villainy—while coward guilt sat on his sullen brow, and, like a criminal

conscious of his deed, tremblingly pronounced his fear.—He hoped means might be found for a sufficient atonement—offered a tender of his hand as a satisfaction, and a life devoted to her service as a recompence for his error.—His humiliation struck me—'twas the only means he could have contrived to assuage my anger.—I hesitated—paused—thought—and still must think on so important a concern.—Assist me—I am half afraid of trusting my Harriot in the hands of a man whose characters I too well know to be the antipodes of Harriot's—he all fire and dissipation!—she all meekness and sentiment!—nor can I think there is any hopes of reformation.—, The offer proceeds more from surprise or fear, than justice and sincerity," the world—the world will exclaim, and my Harriot be a cast-off from society.—Let her—I had rather see her thus, than miserably linked for life to a lump of vice.—She shall retire to some corner of the world, and there weep out the remainder of her days in sorrow—forgetting the wretch who has abused her confidence, but ever remembering the friend who con-

soles her in retirement.—You, my dear Charles, shall bear a part with me in the delightful task of whispering „peace to those who are in trouble, and healing the broken in spirit.”

Adieu, -

L. STERNE.

LETTER X.

TO *****.

SIR,

I FEEL the weight of obligation which your friendship has laid upon me, and if it should never be in my power to make you a recompence, I hope you will be recompensed at the „resurrection of the just.”—I hope, Sir, we shall both be found in that catalogue;—and we are encouraged to hope, by the example of Abraham's faith, even „against hope.”—I think there is, at least, as much probability of our reaching and rejoicing in the „haven where we would be,” as there was of the old patriarch's having a child by his old wife.—There is not any person, living or dead,

whom I have so strong a desire to see and converse with as yourself:—indeed I have no inclination to visit, or say a syllable to but a few persons in this lower vale of vanity and tears besides you;—but I often derive a peculiar satisfaction in conversing with the ancient and modern dead,—who yet live and speak excellently in their works.—My neighbours think me *often alone*,—and yet at such times I am in company with more than five hundred mutes—each of whom, at my pleasure, communicates his ideas to me by dumb signs—quite as intelligibly as any person living can do by the *uttering* of words.—They always keep the distance from me which I direct,—and, with a motion of my hand, I can bring them as near to me as I please.—I lay hands on fifty of them sometimes in an evening, and handle them as I like:—they never complain of ill-usage,—and when dismissed from my presence—though ever so abruptly—take no offence. Such convenience is not to be enjoyed—nor such liberty to be taken—with the living:—we are bound in point of good-manners to admit all our pretended

friends when they knock for an entrance, and dispense with all the nonsense or impertinence which they broach till they think proper to withdraw; nor can we take the liberty of humbly and decently opposing their sentiments without exciting their disgust, and being in danger of their splenetic representation after they have left us.

I am weary of talking to the *many*,—who though quick of hearing—are so „slow of heart to believe”—propositions which are next to self-evident.—You and I were not cast in *one mould*,—corporal comparison will attest it,—and yet we are fashioned so much alike, that we may pass for twins.—Were it possible to take an inventory of all our sentiments and feelings—just and unjust—holy and impure—there would appear as little difference between them as there is between instinct and reason—or wit and madness. The barriers which separate these—like the real essence of bodies—escape the piercing eye of metaphysicks, and cannot be pointed out more clearly than geometricians define a straight line, which is said to have length

without breadth. — — — — O ye learned anatomical aggregates, who pretend to instruct other aggregates! be as candid as the sage whom ye pretend to revere—and tell them, that all you know is, that you know nothing.

— — — — I have a *mort* to communicate to you on different subjects—my mountain will be in labour 'till I see you—and then—What then?—Why, you must expect to see it bring forth—a mouse.—I therefore beseech you to have a watchful eye to the cats;—but it is said mice were designed to be killed by cats—cats to be worried by dogs, etc. etc.—This may be true—and I think I am made to be killed by my cough, — which is a perpetual plague to me.—What, in the name of sound lungs, has my cough to do with you—or—you with my cough?

L. STERNE.

End of the Letters published anonymously.

AN
APPENDIX
OF
XXXII LETTERS
OF
THE LATE REVEREND MR.
LAURENCE STERNE.

(Never printed before.)

APPENDIX

XXII LETTERS

THE LATE REVEREND MR.
LAWRENCE STERNE

INTRODUCTION.

THE ensuing letters have been some years in the possession of the Editor; their publication was deferred, as he was in daily expectation that time and opportunity would happily have been productive of a larger acquisition; but despairing of any further success, he has ventured to present them to the public, with whom he must sincerely regret the loss we sustain by not retrieving a larger correspondence.

The odious light in which many posthumous publications are deservedly viewed, by the discerning few, would have sunk these letters in oblivion, if they had reflected the least discredit on the morals or literary merit of an author who so justly deserves the very distinguished attention he has received; but, on the contrary, as they reflect honour on the author in every capacity, and place him in the most pleasing point of view, and as they carry with them evident and convincing marks of originality, he thinks the most incre-

dulous must applaud his undertaking, and be fully satisfied of their authenticity, as he would be always happy to add to, rather than diminish the lustre of literary fame; thinking it almost as criminal to commit a literary as a corporal murder.

Some apology may be thought necessary for subjoining the last letter, as it has already appeared in a small pamphlet about seven years ago; but as it was never attended to for want of being sufficiently known, the editor hopes the public will unite with him in wishing not a dash of his author's pen might be lost; for which reason he could not resist the temptation of preserving it, though it might be of a temporary nature.—The following account of it is taken from some anecdotes of Mr. Sterne's life, lately published, and prefixed to the before-mentioned pamphlet, as an advertisement.

—, For some time Mr. Sterne lived, in a retired manner, upon a small curacy in Yorkshire, and, probably, would have remained in the same obscurity, if his lively genius had not displayed itself upon an occasion which secured him a friend,

and paved the way for his promotion.—A person who filled a lucrative benefice, was not satisfied with enjoying it during his own life-time, but exerted all his interest to have it intailed on his wife and son after his decease: the gentleman that expected the reversion of this post was Mr. Sterne's friend, who had not, however, sufficient influence to prevent the success of his adversary.—At this time Sterne's satirical pen operated so strongly, that the intended monopolizer informed him, if he would suppress the publication of his sarcasm, he would resign his pretensions to the next candidate."

The title of this piece, it appears, was to have been, „The History of a good „warm Watch-Coat, with which the pre- „sent Possessor is not content to cover his „own shoulders, unless he can cut out of „it, a Petticoat for his Wife, and a pair „of Breeches for his Son."

Whenever genius is distinguished, it will, naturally, excite our attention.—No man ever claimed a greater right to that attention than the author of *Tristram*:—a natural vivacity, united with a sentiment-

tal delicacy, and a tenderness felt by every susceptible soul, deserves commendation: we must rank Sterne as one of the most celebrated originals. „He plays with the fancy, and sometimes, perhaps, too wantonly; but, while he thus designedly masks his main attack, he comes at once upon the heart, refines it, amends it, softens it, beats down each selfish barrier from about it, and opens every source of pity and benevolence.”—This is the true characteristic of our Author, whose poignant wit, and sentimental tenderness, will ever immortalize his memory, while taste exists; and, though I must, unwillingly, subscribe to the opinion of my Author, that „It is not in the power of every one „to taste humour, however he may wish „it.—It is the gift of God;”—yet, I trust, the majority of my readers are possessed of that gift, and will heartily rejoice, with me, in the opportunity of preserving these marks of genius, and handing them to posterity.

L E T T E R S
 OF
 THE LATE REVEREND MR.
 LAURENCE STERNE.

(Never printed before.)

L E T T E R I.

TO W. C. ESQ.

Coxwold, July 1, 1764.

I AM safe arrived at my bower—and I trust that you have no longer any doubt about coming to embower it with me. Having for six months together been running at the ring of pleasure, you will find that repose here which, all young as you are, you ought to want. We will be witty, or classical, or sentimental, as it shall please you best. My milk-maids shall weave you garlands; and every day, after coffee, I will take you to pay a visit to my nuns. Do not, however, indulge your fancy beyond measure, but rather let me indulge

Sterne's Letters. Vol. II.

L

mine; or, at least, let me give you the history of it, and how the fair sisterhood dwell in one of its visionary corners.—Now, what is all this about? you'll say.—Have a few moments patience, and I will tell you.

You must know, then, that on passing out of my back-door, I very soon gain a path, which, after conducting me through several verdant meadows and shady thickets, brings me in about twenty minutes to the ruins of a monastery, where in times long past, a certain number of cloistered females devoted their—lives— I scarce know what I was going to write—to religious solitude.—This saunter of mine, when I take it, I call **PAYING A VISIT TO MY NUNS.**

Is is an awful spot—a rivulet flows by it, and a lofty bank, covered with wood, that gives a gloom to the whole, and forbids the thoughts, if they were ever so disposed, from wandering away from the place. Solitary Sanctity never found a nook more appropriated to her nature!—It is a place for an antiquary to sejour in for a month—and examine with all the

spirit of rusty research. But I am no antiquary, as you well know—and therefore I come here upon a different and a better errand—that is—to examine myself.

So I lean, lackadayfically, over a gate and look at the passing stream—and forgive the spleen, the gout, and the envy of a malicious world. And, after having taken a stroll beneath mouldering arches, I summon the sisterhood together, and take the fairest among them, and sit down with her on a stone, beneath a bunch of alders—And do what? you'll say—Why I examine her gentle heart, and see how it is attuned; I then guess at her wishes, and play with the cross that hangs at her bosom—in short—I make love to her.

Fie, for shame! Triftram—that is not as it ought to be.—Now I declare, on the contrary, that it is exactly what it ought to be; for though philosophers may say, among the many other foolish things philosophers have said, that a man who is in love is not in his right senses;—I do assert, in opposition to all their saws and see-saws, that he is never in his right senses, or I would rather say, his right

sentiments, but when he is pursuing some Dulcinea or other. If that should be the case with you at this moment, I will forgive your staying from me; but if this letter should find you at the instant when your last flame is blown out, and before a new one is lighted up, and you should not take post and come to me and my nuns, I will abuse in their names and my own, to the end of the chapter—though I believe, after all, at the end of the chapter I should feel myself affectionately your's,

L. STERNE.

LETTER II.

TO W. C. ESQ.

Coxwold, July 17, 1764.

AND so you have been at the seats of the learned.—If I could have guessed at such an intention, I would have contrived that something in an epistolary shape should have met you there, with half a dozen lines recommending you to the care of the *Master of Jesus*.—He was my tutor

when I was at college, and a very good kind of man. He used to let me have my way, when I was under his direction, and that shewed his sense, for I was born to travel out of the common road, and to get aside from the highway path, and he had sense enough to see it, and not to trouble me with trammels. I was neither made to be a *thill-horse* nor a *fore-horse*; in short, I was not made to go in a *team*, but to amble along as I liked; and so that I do not kick, or splash, or run over any one, who, in the name of common-sense, has a right to interrupt me?—Let the good folks laugh if they will, and much good may it do them. Indeed I am persuaded, and I think I could prove, nay, and I would do it, if I were writing a book instead of a letter, the truth of what I once told a very great statesman, orator, politician, and as much more as you please—, that every time a man smiles—much more so, when he laughs—it adds something to the fragment of life.”

But the staying five days at Cambridge does not come within the immediate reach of my crazy comprehension, and you might

have employed your time much, much better, in urging your mettlesome tits towards Coxwould.

I may suppose that you have been picking a hole in the skirts of Gibbs's cumbersome architecture, or measuring the façade of Trinity College Library, or peeping about the Gothic perfections of King's College Chapel, or, which was doing a better thing, sipping tea and talking sentimentally with the Miss Cookes, or disturbing Mr. Gray with one of your enthusiastic visits—I say *disturbing* him; for with all your own agreeableness, and all your admiration of him, he would rather have your room than your company. But mark me, I do not say this to his glory, but to his shame. For I would be content with any room, so I had your company.

But tell me, I beseech you, what you did with Scroop all this time. The looking at the heavy walls of muzzing Colleges, and gazing at the mouldy pictures of their founders, is not altogether in his way; nor did he wander where I have whilom wandered, on Cam's all-verdant banks with willows crowned, and call

the muse. Alas, he'd rather call a waiter—And how such a milkfop as you could travel—I mean be suffered to travel two leagues in the same chaise with him, I know not—but from that admirable and kind pliability of spirit which you possess whenever you please, but which you do not always please to possess, I do not mean that a man should wear a court dress when he is going to a puppet-show; but, on the other hand, to keep the best suit of embroidery for those only whom he loves, though there is something noble in it, will never do. The world, my dear friend, will not let it do. For while there are such qualities in the human mind as ingratitude and duplicity, unlimited confidence and this patriotism of friendship, which I have heard you rave and rant about, is a very dangerous business.

I could preach a sermon on the subject—to say the truth, I am got as grave as if I were in my pulpit. Thus are the projects of this life destroyed. When I took up my pen, my humour was gay, frisky, and fanciful—and now am I sliding into all the see-saw gravity of solemn councils.

I want nothing but an ass to look over my pales and set up a braying to keep me in countenance.

Leave, leave your Lincolnshire seats, and come to my dale; Scroop, I know, is heartily tired of you. Besides, I want a nurse, for I am not quite well, and have taken to milk-coffee. Remember me, however, to him kindly, and to yourself cordially, for

I am your's most truly,

L. STERNE.

LETTER III.

TO W. C. ESQ.

Coxwold, Aug. 5, 1764.

AND so you sit in Scroop's temple, and drink tea, and converse classically.—Now I should like to know what is the nature of this disorder which you call classicality; if it consists in a rage to converse on ancient subjects in a modern manner, or on modern subjects in an ancient one;—or are you both out of your senses, and do you fancy yourselves with Virgil and

Horace at Sinuessæ, or with Tully and Atticus at Tusculum? Oh how it would delight me to peep at you from behind a laurel bush, and see you surrounded with columns, and covered by a dome, quaffing the extract of a Chinese weed, and talking of men who boasted the inspiration of the Falernian grape!

What a couple of vapid, inert beings you must be! I should really give you up for lost, if it were not for the confidence I have in the re-invigorating powers of my society, to which you must now have immediate recourse, if you wish for a restoration. Make haste then, my good friend, and seek the aid of your physician ere it be too late.

You know not the interest I take in your welfare. Have I not ordered all the linen to be taken out of the press, and rewashed before it was dirty, that you may have a clean table-cloth every day, with a napkin into the bargain? And have I not ordered a kind of windmill, that makes my head ach again with its clatter, to be placed in my fine cherry-tree, that the fruit may be preserved from the

birds, to furnish you a desert? And do you not know that you will have curds and cream for your supper? Think on these things, and let Scroop go to Lincoln sessions by himself, and talk classically with country justices. In the mean time, we will philosophize and sentimentalize:—the last word is a bright invention of the moment in which it was written, for yours or Dr. Johnson's service:—and you shall sit in my study and take a peep into the world as into a shew-box, and amuse yourself as I present the pictures of it to your imagination. Thus will I teach you to laugh at its follies, to pity its errors, and despise its injustice. And I will introduce you, among the rest, to some tender-hearted damsel, on whose cheeks some bitter affliction has placed a tear—and, having heard her story, you shall take a white handkerchief from your pocket, to wipe the moisture from her eyes and from your own:——and then you shall go to bed, not to the damsel, but with an heart conscious of those sentiments, and possessed of those feelings, which will give softness to your pillow, sweetness to your

flumbers, and gladness to your waking moments.

You shall sit in my porch, and laugh at Attic vestibules. I love the Classics as well as any man ought to love them,—but, among all their fine sayings, their fine writings, and their fine verses, their most enthusiastic admirer would not be able to find me half a dozen stories that have any sentiment in them;—and so much for that.

If you don't come soon, I shall set about another volume of Tristram without you. So God bless you, for I am your's most truly,

L. STERNE.

L E T T E R IV.

TO ———.

Coxwold, Aug. 8, 1764.

I AM grieved for your downfall, though it was only out of a park-chair.—May it be the last you will receive in this world; though, while I write this wish, my heart heaves a deep sigh, and I believe it will

not be read by you, my friend, without a similar accompaniment.

Alas! alas! my dear boy, you are born with talents to soar aloft; but you have an heart, which, my apprehensions tell me, will keep you low.—I do not mean, you know I do not, any thing base or grovelling;—but, instead of winging your way above the storm, I am afraid that you will calmly submit to its rigours, and house yourself afterwards in some humble shed, and there live contented, and chaunt away the time, and be lost to the world.

How the wind blows I know not; and I have no inclination to walk to my window, where, perhaps, I might catch the course of a cloud and be satisfied;—but here I am got up to my knees—I should rather say up to my heart—in a subject, which is ever accompanied with some afflicting vaticination or other. I am not afraid of your doing any wrong but to yourself. A secret knowledge of some circumstances which you have never communicated to me, have alarmed my affection for you—not from any immediate harm they can produce, but from the convic-

tion they have forced upon me concerning your disposition, and the nicer parts of your character. If you do not come soon to me, I shall take the wings of some fine morning and fly to you; but I should rather have you here: for I wish to have you alone; and if you will let me be a MENTOR to you for one little month, I will be content—and you shall be a MENTOR to me the rest of the year; or, if you will, the rest of my days.

I long most anxiously, my dear friend, to teach you—not to give an opiate to those sensibilities of your nature, which make me love you as I do; nor to check your glowing fancy, that gives such grace to polished youth; nor to yield the beverage of the fountain for the nectar of the cask; but to use the world no better, or to please you, a very little better than it deserves.—But think not, I beseech you, that I would introduce my young Telemachus to such a foul and squint-eyed piece of pollution as suspicion. Avaunt to such a base, ungenerous passion! I would sooner carry you to CALYPSO at once, and give you at least a little pleasure for your

pain. But there is a certain little spot to be found somewhere in the mid-way between trusting every body and trusting nobody; and so well am I acquainted with the longitudes, latitudes, and bearings of this world of ours, that I could put my finger upon it, and direct you at once to it; and I think I could give you so many good reasons why you should go there, that you would not hesitate to set off immediately, and I would accompany you thither, and serve as Cicerone to you. I wish therefore much, very much, to talk with you about it and other serious matters.

As for your bodily infirmity, never mind it; you may come here by gentle stages, and without inconvenience; and I will be your surgeon or your nurse; and warm you verjuice every evening, and bathe your sprain with it, and talk of these things. So tell me, I pray you, the day that I am to meet you at York. In the mean time and always may a good Providence protect you—It is the sincere wish of

Your affectionate,

L. STERNE.

LETTER V.

TO ———.

Coxwold, Monday Morning.

I SHALL forgive the tardiness of your passage hither, if it be true, as a still, small voice of a York gossip has informed me, that you repose, with your infirm limb, on a sofa in Mrs. — —'s withdrawing-room, and have your coffee and tea handed to you by her two daughters, and one of them has charms enough for the three Graces—and that they play on their harpsichord, and, with voices stolen from heaven, sing duets to you, while you, stretched on damask, command, as it were, that little world of beauty and good sense which surrounds you.

You cannot, my good friend, have known the charming people with whom you are so happy more than eight and forty hours at most. Now I make this observation, merely to have the pleasure of making another, which is—that you have learned the art, and a very comfortable

one it is, of setting yourself at ease with worthy spirits, when you have the good fortune to meet them. Indeed, I may claim the credit of having taught you the maxim, that life is too short to be long in forming the tender and happy connexions of it. 'Tis a miserable waste of time, as well as a very base business, to be looking at each other, as an usurer looks at a security to find a flaw in it. No: if you meet a heart worth being admitted into, and you really feel yourself worthy of admission, the matter is arranged in five hours as well as five years.

Hail! ye gentle sympathies, that can approach two amiable hearts to each other, and chase every discordant idea from an union that nature has designed by the same happy colouring of character that she has given them!—But, *lucus a non lucendo*—I have received a kind of *dish-dash* sort of letter from Garrick, out of which all my chemistry cannot extract a sympathetic atom. I am glad, however, to have an opportunity of writing a short answer to him, that I may address a long postscript to his *cara sposa*.

I love *Garrick* on the stage better than any thing in the world, *except Mrs. Garrick off it*: and if there is any one heart in the world I should like to get a corner of—it would be her's. But I am too great a sinner to do more than approach the portal of so much excellence—there to bend one knee at least, and ejaculate at a distance from the altar.

I have often thought on what this spirit of idolatry, which is continually bearing me to the feet of some fair image or other, will do with me twenty years hence; and whether, after having had, during my younger days, a damsel to smooth my pillow, I should find one, in my age, to put on my slippers. However, I need not trouble myself or you about these conjectures; for I well know, that there is not life in me to make the experiment.

This instant brings me a letter from your kind hostess, who is determined not to let you go till I come to fetch you.—To-morrow, by noon, therefore, I shall embrace you, and her—and the damsels.

I am, most cordially, yours,

L. STERNE.

L E T T E R VI.

TO ———, ESQ.

Crazy Castle.

THOUGH I hope and trust you believe that I am not only disposed to laugh with those who weep; yet it is most true, my dear friend, that I could not but smile as I read the account you sent me of your distress and disappointment; and when I gave your letter to Hall, for you see I am at Crazy Castle, he laughed the tears into his eyes.

Now you must not suppose, nor can you imagine, that either of us trifled with your sufferings, for you know I love you, and Hall says you are a lad of promise; but we were merry at the amiable simplicity of your nature, in wondering that there is ever any villainy in a villainous world, and at the idea, how little a time you were destined to possess that delicious, for I will call it, with all its scrapes and duperies, a delicious sentiment. You have just opened the volume of life, and startle

to find a blot in the first page: alas! alas! as you proceed you will find whole pages so blotted and blurred, that you will scarce be able to distinguish the characters. 'Tis a sorry business, I must confess, to plant suspicion in a breast that has never known it, and to check the glow of hope which animates the beginning of the journey, by pointing out the interruptions and dangers that will be necessarily encountered in the course of it. But this is the duty of friendship, and arises from the nature of our existence and state of the world. If, however, after all, you can acquire an useful experience, and be taught to put yourself on your guard, at the expence of a few score guineas, you have made a good bargain; so be content, and no more of your complainings.

But you will tell me, perhaps, that it is not the matter of the loss, but the manner of it, that you consider as a misfortune. The being treated so ill, and with so much ingratitude, is the business that afflicts you. Hall, who is still laughing, bids me tell you for your comfort, that he who *dupes* must be a *rascal*; and he

who is duped may be an *honest man*; but he is a *cynic*, and administers his dose in his own way. Now, was I to console you in mine, I should tell you, that gratitude is not so common a virtue in the world as it ought to be, for all our sakes; but ingratitude, my dear friend, is not an offspring of the present moment; it seems to have existed from the beginning, and will continue to disgrace the world when we have long been in the valley of Jehoshaphat: nay, you must have read, indeed I know that I have written a sermon upon the subject, that of the lepers who were healed, but *one* returned to give thanks for his restoration. I do not, however, tell you these things that you may find consolation in the miserable habits of mankind, but that you may not suppose yourself worse used than the rest of the world, which is very common with young men like yourself, who feel at every pore, and have not yet had that collision with untoward circumstances which awakens caution, or begets patience.

And so much for you and your miseries, which I doubt not will have been

dissipated by the bewitching smiles of some fair damsel or other, before my grave see-saw letter shall reach you. Let me know, I beg of you, your plan of operations for the winter, if you have one. You may, I think, though you may think otherwise, fly from the joys and damps of this ungenial climate, and winter serenely with me, in Languedoc; your company would do me good, and mine would do you no harm—at least I think so; and we shall return to London time enough to peep in at Ranelagh, and look at the Birth-day. In short, write to me upon the subject, and direct to me here, for here I am to be during this shooting month of September; so God bless you, and give you patience if you want it. I remain, Your's, most cordially,

L. STERNE.

L E T T E R VII.

TO W— — C— —, ESQ.

Couxwould, June 11, 1765.

SO Burton *) really told you, with a grave face and an apparent mortification, that I had ridiculed my Irish friends at Bath for an hour together, and had made a large company merry at Lady Lepel's table during a whole afternoon at their expence. By heavens, 'tis false as misrepresentation can make it. It is not in my nature, I trust, to be so ungrateful, as I should be, if absent or present, I should be ungracious to them. That I should make Burton look grave, whose countenance is formed to mark the smiles of an amiable and an honest heart, is not within my chapter of possibilities;—I am sure it is not in that of my intentions to say any thing that is unurbane of such a man as he is:—for, in my life, did I never communicate with a gentleman of qualities

*) The present amiable Lord Cunningham.

more winning, and dispositions more generous. He invited me to his house with kindness, and he gave me a truly graceful welcome, for it was *with all his heart*. He is as much formed to make society pleasant as any one I ever saw; and I wish he were as rich as Croesus, that he might do all the good an unbounded generosity would lead him to do. I never passed more pleasant hours in my life than with him and his fair countrywomen; and foul befall the man who should let drop a word in dispraise of him or them!—And there is the charming widow Moor, where, if I had not a piece of legal meadow of my own, I should rejoice to *batten* the rest of my days;—and the gentle elegant Gore, with her fine form and Grecian face, and whose lot I trust it will be to make some man happy who knows the value of a tender heart.—Nor shall I forget another widow, the interesting Mrs. Vesey, with her vocal and fifty other accomplishments.—I abuse them!—it must not be told—for it is false—and it should not be believed, for it is unnatural.—It is true I did talk of them for an hour to-

gether, but no sarcasm or unlucky fallies mingled with my speech: yes, I did talk of them, as they would wish to be talked of—with smiles on my countenance, praise on my tongue, hilarity in my heart, and the goblet in my hand. Besides, I am myself of their own country: my father was a considerable time on duty with his regiment in Ireland, and my mother gave me to the world when she was there, on duty with him. I beg of you, therefore, to make all these good people believe that I have been at least misunderstood; for it is impossible that Lady Barrymore could mean to misrepresent me.

Read Burton this letter if you have an opportunity, and assure him of my most cordial esteem and respect for him and all his social excellencies; and whisper something kind and gentle for me, as you well know how, to my fair countrywomen; and let not an unmerited prejudice or displeasure against me remain any longer in their tender bosoms. When you get into disgrace of any kind, be assured that I will do as much for you.

I am here as idle as ease of heart can

make me; I shall wait for you till the beginning of next month; when, if you do not come, I shall proceed to while away the rest of the summer at Crazy Castle and Scarborough. In the beginning, the very beginning, of October, I mean to arrive in Bond-street with my Sermons; and when I have arranged their publication, then I go mad for Italy, where you would do well to accompany me. In the mean-time, however, I hope and wish to see you here: it will, after all, be much better, than playing the Strephon with phitifical nymphs at the Bristol Fountain. But do as you may.

I am, most sincerely yours,

L. STERNE.

LETTER VIII.

TO — — — —.

I DID not answer your letter as you desired me, for at the moment I received it, I really thought all my projects, for some time to come, were *burned* to a cinder; or, which is the better expression

Sterne's Letters. Vol. II.

N

of the two, had evaporated in smoke; for, not half an hour before, an affrighted messenger, on a breathless horse, had arrived to acquaint me, that the parsonage house at — — was on fire when he came away, and burning like a bundle of faggots; and while I was preparing to set off to see my house, after it was burned down, your letter arrived to console me on my way; for it gave me every assurance, that if I were left without an hole to put my head into, or a rag to cover my — — body, you would give me a comfortable room in your house, and a clean shirt into the bargain.

In short, by the carelessness of my curate or his wife, or some one within his gates, I am an house out of pocket—I say, literally, out of pocket; for I must rebuild it at my own costs and charges, or the Church of York, who originally gave it me, will do those things, which, in good sense, ought not to be done; but which the wiseacres, who compose it, will tell me they have a right to do. My loss will be upwards of two hundred pounds, with some books, etc. etc. so that you

may now lay aside all your apprehensions about what I shall do with the wealth that my sermons have brought, and are to bring to me — I told you *then* that some devilish accident or other would provide me with the ends of getting rid of the means; and I had a cross accident in my head at the time, which I did not communicate to you; but it is not that which has fallen out, nor any thing like it; though this may fall out too, for aught I know, and then the fee simple of my sermons will be gone for ever.

Now these sermons of mine were, most of them, written in the very house that is burned down, and all of them preached, I fear again and again, in the very church to which it belonged; and they now answer a purpose I never dreamed or thought of; but so it is in this world, and thus are things hinged and hung together, or rather unhinged, or unhung; for I have my doubts at present, whether we shall see the dying gladiator next winter. The matter, however, that concerns me most in the business, is the strange unaccountable conduct of my poor unfortunate cu-

rate, not in *setting fire* to the house, for I do not accuse him of it, God knows, nor any one else; but in *setting off* the moment after it happened, and flying, like Paul to Tarsus, through fear of a prosecution from me.

That the man should have formed such an idea of me, as to suppose me capable, if I did not sooth his sorrows, of adding another to their number, wounded me sorely. For, amidst all my errors and follies, I do not believe there is any thing, in the colour or complexion of any part of my life, that would justify the shadow of such an apprehension. Besides, he deprived me of all the comfort I made out to myself from the misfortune; which was, as it pleased Heaven to deprive him of one house, to take him and his wife, and his little one, into another—I mean into that where I lived myself. And He who now reads my heart, and will one day judge me for the secrets of it—He well knows that it did not grow cold within me, on account of the accident, till I was informed that this silly man was a fugitive, from the fear of my wrath.

The family of the C—s were kind to me beyond measure, as they have always been; they are a sort of people that you would like extremely; and before the summer is past, I hope to present you to them; though, if I recollect, you know the charming damsel of the house already, and the rest of it, though not so young or so fair, and as amiable as she is. As I cannot leave you in possession of a better subject for your reflection, etc. I shall say adieu, and God bless you. In a few days you shall hear again from

Your affectionate and faithful

L. STERNE.

L E T T E R IX.

TO —, ESQ.

I HAVE received, my dear friend, your kind answer to my letter. And you must know that it was just such an one as I wished to receive from you: nay, it was just such an one as I expected that you would write to me. I should have been disappointed if it had been in any other

form or shape of friendship. But understand me, if you please: I should have been disappointed for your sake, and not for my own; for though I am charmed that you should have made me those unreserved offers of friendship which are so gracious in you, I am almost as much pleased that my Exchequer is in that state of sufficiency as not to require them.

I have made my bargain for rebuilding my parsonage, and settled all arrangements, with all parties concerned, in a manner more to my satisfaction than I could have expected. I was rather in haste to settle this account, that there might be no risque of leaving my wife and Lydia a dilapidation for their fortune: for I have no reason to believe that the * of * would be more kind to them, when friendless and unprotected, than they had been to the husband of the one and the father of the other, who, when he was a poor Curate, had pride enough to despise their Reverences, and wit enough to make others laugh at them. But may God forgive them, as I do! Amen.

I wrote to Hall on account of my dis-

after; and his answer bid me find out a *conceit* on the occasion, and comfort myself with it. Tully, the Orator, the Politician, the Philosopher, the Moralist, the Consul, etc. etc. etc. adopted, as he candidly tells every one, who reads his works, this mode of consolation, when he lost his daughter; and if we may believe him, with success. Now this same Tully, you must know, was like my father; I mean *Mr. Shandy*, of *Shandy Hall*, who was as well pleased with a *misfortune* that gave him an opportunity of displaying his eloquence, as with a *blessing* that obliged him to hold his tongue. Both these great men were fond of conceits, I mean their own; so I will tell you a story of a *Conceit*, not of Cicero's nor of my father's, but of the Lord of *Crazy*.

You must know then, that this same friend of mine, and, I may add, of your's also, in a moment of lazy pride, took it into his head that he would have a town chariot, to save his feet by day, and to carry him to Ranelagh in the evening. For this purpose, after consulting a coach-maker, he had allotted *one hundred* and

forty pounds; and he wrote me word of it. On my arrival in town, about three months after this communication, I found a card of invitation from Lord Spencer to dine with him on the following Sunday; and I had no sooner read it, than Hall's fine crane-necked chariot came bounce, as it were, upon my recollection; so I sallied forth to ask him how he did, and to borrow his carriage, that I might pay my visit in pomp as a *pontificalibus*. I found him at home, made a friendly inquiry or two, and told him of the little arrangement I had formed; when he replied, with one of his Cynical smiles, that his mortification was in the extreme, for that his chariot was gone post to Scotland. I stared, and he laughed—not at me, but at his own *conceit*—and you shall have it, such as it is.

I must inform you then, that at the moment when the coach-maker was receiving his last instructions, he himself received a letter; which letter acquainted him, that his son, who was quartered at Edinburgh, had got into a terrible riot there; to get out of the consequences of which, he demand-

ed almost the precise sum that had been destined for the chariot. So that the *hundred and forty pounds*, which had been set apart to build a chariot in London, were employed to repair broken windows, broken lamps, and broken heads, in Edinburgh; and Hall comforted himself with the conceit that his *chariot* was gone *post* to Scotland. So much for comforts and conceits;—and happy is it for us when we can, by any means, *conceit* ourselves into comfort. I could say more upon this matter, but my paper is almost filled; and I have only space to express a wish, that your life may never want any of those petty helps to make it as happy as, if I greatly mistake not, it must be honourable. Let me see you soon; and, in the mean time, and at all times, may God be with you.

Your's, most affectionately,

L. STERNE.

LETTER X.

TO — —, ESQ.

Coxwould, near Easingwould.

YOU are not singular in your opinion about my *wonderful* capacity for poetry. Beauclerk and Lock, and I think Langton, have said what you have said on the subject, and founded their opinion, as you have done, on the fragment of an Introduction to the Ode to Julia, in Trifram Shandy. The unity of the episode would have been wounded, if I had added another line; and if I had added a dozen, my character as a poetical genius, which, by the bye, I never had, would have been lost for ever—or rather would never have been suspected.

Hall had also similar ideas on this very matter, and, on the strength of his opinion, ventured once to give me an unfinished poem of his own, and bade me go on with it—and so I did, heltering and skeltering at a most terrible rate:—in short, I added some sixty or fourscore lines

to the business, which he called doggrel, and which I think he called rightly; however he chose to let them stand, to use his own phrase, as a curiosity; so into the press they went, and helped to compose the worst squib our crazy friend ever let off. I do not, however, mention these things to lessen the merit of your opinion, by pointing out its similarity to that of others. You need not be ashamed to think with such men, if even they should be wrong, which, on this particular subject, I most solemnly believe you all to be. *Cum his errare* is something—and all that—

I once, it is true, wrote an epitaph, which I liked myself, but the person at whose request I did it, sacrificed it to one of his own, which he liked better, but which I did not—so my lines were thrown aside, and his own nerveless rhyme was engraved on a marble, which deserved a better inscription: for it covered the dust of one, whose gentle nature, and amiable qualities, merited more than common praise, or commonplace eulogium. However, I shed a tear over the sepulchre; which, if the dead could have known it,

would have been more acceptable than the most splendid diction that ever glared on monumental alabaster.

I also wrote a kind of Shandean, sing-song, dramatic piece of rhyme for Mr. Beard—and he sung it at Ranelagh, as well as on his own stage, for the benefit of some one or other. He asked for something of the kind, and I knew not how to refuse him; for, a year before, he had, in a very respectful manner, and without any previous acquaintance, presented me with the freedom of Covent-Garden Theatre. The act was gracious, and I liked it the better, because the monarch of Drury-Lane had known me for some few years, and besides had, for some time, occupied a front seat in my page, before he offered me the freedom—not of Drury-Lane house, but of Drury-Lane pit. I told him on the occasion, that he *acted* great things and *did* little ones, so he stammered and looked foolish, and performed, at length, with a bad grace, what his rival manager was so kind as to do with the best grace in the world—But no more of that—he is so complete on the stage, that I ought not to mention his patch-work off it.

However, to return to my subject—if I can; for digression is interwoven with my nature; and to get to my point, or find my way back to it, when I have wandered aside, as other men do, is not in the line of my faculties. But though I may not be a poet, the clerk of my parish is—not absolutely in my conceit—but, which is better, in that of his neighbours; and, which is the best of all—in his own. His muse is a professional one, for she only inspires him to indite hymns; and it is appropriate, for she leads him to such subjects as are suitable to his spiritual office, and which, like those of his brethren, Sternhald and Hopkins, may be said or sung in churches. In short, there had been a terrible disease among the cattle, and our parish had suffered greatly, so that this parochial bard thought it a proper subject for a spiritual song, which he accordingly composed, and gave it out on the Sunday following, to the praise and glory of God, as an hymn of his own composing. Not only the murrain itself, but the sufferers by the calamity were vociferated through the aisles in all the pomp and

devotion of rustic psalmody. The last stanza, which is the only one I recollect, rather unhinged my devotion, but it seemed to rivet that of the congregation, and therefore I had no right to complain. I leave it with you as a *bonne bouche*, and wish you a good night.

Here's Jemmy How has lost a cow;
And so has Johnny Bland;
Therefore we'll put our trust in God,
And not in any other man.

L. STERNE.

LETTER XI.

TO —, ESQ.

Coxwold, Wednesday night.

I SEND you, my dear friend, as you request it, the epitaph which I mentioned in my last epistle to you. I write it from recollection; and, though it may not contain the precise expression, it will certainly possess the sentiment of the original composition—and that is of the most consequence. I remember well it came from the

heart, for I most sincerely loved the amiable person, whose virtues deserved a better inscription, and, according to a very common course of things, found a worse. But here it is—

Columns and labour'd urns but vainly
show

An idle scene of fabricated woe: —

The sweet companion and the friend sincere
Need no mechanic arts to force the tear:
In heart-felt numbers, never meant to shine;
'Twill flow eternal o'er an hearse like thine;
'Twill flow while gentle goodness has one
friend,

Or kindred tempers have a tear to lend!

Hall liked it, I remember—and Hall always knows what ought to be liked, and, in certain humours, will be candid upon these sentimental subjects, and acknowledge that he feels them. He is an excellent scholar and a good critic, but his judgment has more severity than it ought to have, and his taste less delicacy than it should possess. He has, also, great humanity, but, somehow or other, there is

so often such a mixture of sarcasm in it, that there are many who will not believe he has a single scruple of it in his composition. Nay, I am acquainted with several, who cannot be persuaded but that he is a very insensible, hard-hearted man, which I, who have known him long and known him well, assure you he is not. He may not always possess the grace of charity, but he feels the reality of it, and continually performs benevolent actions, though not always, I must confess, in a benevolent manner. And here is the grief of the business. He will do a kindness with a sneer, or a joke, or a smile; when, perhaps, a tear, or a grave countenance at least, would better become him. But this is his way; it is the language of his character; and though one might wish it to be otherwise, yet I cannot tell what right any of us have to pass a severe sentence upon it, for no other reason in the world but because our own failings are of a different complexion. And so much for all that.

I am preparing to prance it for a week or ten days at Scarborough. If you pass your autumn at Mulgrave-hall, take that

place in your way, and I will accompany you on your visit, and then to Crazy Castle, and so home; and then to London—and then God knows where—but it shall be where it pleases him: this is *clerically* said, however, and it would be well for the best of us if it were thought and considered as often as it was said. But so it is, that the lips and the heart, which ought never to be asunder, are sometimes wandering at different corners of the earth. Mine at least are in the closest conjunction, when I offer you my most affectionate regard. So good night, and may the visions of a good spirit attend you.

Most truly your's,

L. STERNE.

L E T T E R XII.

TO —, ESQ.

Scarborough.

I SHALL not reply, my dear friend, to all the kind things you think and said of me.—I trust, indeed, that I deserve some of them; and I am well pleased to find

Sterne's Letters. Vol. II.

O

that you think I deserve them all — But however that may be, I desire you to cherish those benevolent sentiments which you have so warmly expressed in the paper before me, both for your own sake, and that of the person who is the subject of them.

Your commands in general should be obeyed without reflection—but in this particular instance, a rare gleam of prudence has shot across me, and I beg leave to reflect for a few moments on the subject—and were I to take wisdom upon me, and reflect for a few days, the result, I am sure, would be, that I should not obey your commands at all.

The giving advice, my good friend, is the most thankless generosity in the world—because, in the first place, it costs you nothing, and, in the next, it is just such a thing as the person to whom you present it will think that he does not want. This, you see, is my way of reasoning; but I believe, from my heart, that it will apply too well to the subject between us.

There are such things in the world as *wrong heads* and *right hearts*—and *wrong*

hearts and right heads.— Now, for myself, and speaking under the influence of my own particular feelings, I would rather be of the *right heart* family, with all their blunders, errors, and confusions; but if I want a business to be done, or a plan to be executed, give the *right head*, if there is a *right heart* into the bargain, so much the better: but it is upon the former that I must rely—and whether the latter be right or wrong, is not a matter of absolute consideration. This is not, my dear friend quite orthodox, according to your system; but as you proceed, every day will tend to increase the propinquity of this opinion to your own.

Now I am rather disposed to think, without leaning to the uncharitable side of the question, that poor — — — is of the *Wrong-head* family.—I know his heart—and I am sure his present scrape arises from the good dispositions of it. Nevertheless, though I think myself a dab at giving good counsel in such cases as his, I cannot bring myself to prescribe on the occasion.—It is impossible to do it, without informing him of the nature of his disease,

which is neither more nor less than absolute wrong-headedness; and, were I to do it, he would exhibit another symptom of his disorder, by throwing my prescription out of the window, and perhaps threatening the same mischief to the physician himself.

If you have influence sufficient to induce him to apply to me, I will most readily exert my best for him; and I can then do the bitter business, and give the unpalatable dose with a good grace.—Here then we will, if you please, let the matter rest for the present.

I write in haste and on my pillow, that you may, as soon as possible, be acquainted with my sentiments, in a matter wherein you have a greater dependence upon me, than I fear the event will justify—So good morning, and God bless you.

I received a letter yesterday from poor dear Lydia — It is an amiable mad-cap — and God bless her also. Once more adieu.

Yours, etc.

L. STERNE.

L E T T E R XIII.

Scarborough, August 29, 1787.

YOU refine too much, my dear friend, you do indeed. Your reasoning is ingenious, and produces a neat, pretty, plausible train of argument, that would make a figure in a company of femable philosophers; but, if committed to paper, would be pardonable only when written on the fan of some *pedantic Dulcinea*. You run into divisions, when a simple modulation would answer better, that is, would produce more pleasing effects both in yourself and the sentimental spirit whom you might wish to please.

Opinion, my dear fellow, somehow or other, rules all mankind; and not like a kind master, or, which would be more congenial, a gentle mistress, but like a tyrant, whose wish is power, and whose gratification is servility.— Opinion leads us by the ears, the eyes—and, I had almost said, by the *nose*. It warps our understandings, confounds our judgments, dissipates

experience, and turns our passions to its purpose. In short, it becomes the governess of our lives, and usurps the place of reason, which it has kicked out of office.— This is among the strange truths which cannot be explained by that mortifying description which time will display to your experience hereafter, with ten times the credit which would accompany any present endeavours of mine to the same purpose.

If you would know more of the matter, and can bring yourself to risk the opinion, which, by the bye, I do not advise you to do, ask A—why he submits, with such a placid subservience, to the little wench who lives with him? You know, and all his friends know, that he has but half, not half the enjoyments of life, through the fear of her vengeance, whatever it may be. He has fortune, understanding, and courage:—he loves society, and adds greatly to the pleasures of it—and yet how often does he leave it half enjoyed! Nay, to come more home to the business, how often has he left our pleasant classical meetings, before they have arisen to their usual glow, in order to humour this little

piece of disgrace, whom he has not the resolution to send back to the banks of the Wye, where the fifty pounds a year he might give her would make her queen of the village!—We pity poor A—, we argue with him, we wonder at him—do we not? But in this we deceive ourselves—for the wisest and best of us are governed by some little dirty drab of an opinion, whose governance is equally disgraceful, and much more injurious—as it will, perhaps, give a colour to the whole current of our lives. A mistress, with all her arts and fascinations, may, in time, be got rid of; but opinion, once rooted, becomes a part of ourselves—it lives and dies with us.

It must be acknowledged, that I have been rather sermonic this fine morning, but you know how and where to apply what has been written, and I leave the whole to your practice, if you think proper; and if you do not—but what have I to do with *ifs*? It is an exceptionable monosyllable, and I fling it from me.

B— is here, and tells me that he has left you continually driving between London and Richmond.—What beauty of the

Hill has enchanted you there? Or what swan of the silver Thames are you dying for?—I take it very ill of you that you never favour me with a single communication concerning your *Dorothies*, or your *Delias*: I protest most seriously that I will never write to you again, till you give me an history of your chains; and who it is has bound you at present on the river's bank—tell me who the Naiad is?

Mr. F—, the Apostolic F—, as Lady— calls him, in his way to—, hinted to me something serious. He talked of a marriage—to which I replied, God forbid!—But do not, I pray, be angry with my exclamation; for it was neither a thoughtless or a peevish one, but an impulse of that sincere regard which you more than deserve from me.—With your dispositions, and in your situation, I hardly think there is a woman in the kingdom who would be an happy match for you; and if you think proper to ask me, I will, hereafter, tell you why:—at present I shall content myself with telling you, that I am most cordially your's

L. STERNE.

LETTER XIV.

September 9, 1765.

I MEAN, my dear friend, that this epistle should meet you, and greet you, a day or two at least, before you leave town; and I wish it, from that spirit of miserable self-interest, which you know governs and directs me in all I do. — But, least you should not like this reason, I will give you another, and which may be nearer the truth; at least I hope so.

I want very much to know whether B—— has arranged the matter with *Foley* the banker, at Paris, about Mrs. Sterne's remittance, as I ordered him. You must know that I suspect he has been dilatory, not from dishonesty, for I believe him to be as honest a poor creature as ever was vamped into the form he wears: but, perhaps, his exchequer might not be in a convenient state to answer my orders; and if so, I only beg to be informed of the truth; which, as he does not answer my letters, he appears to be afraid to tell.

Sterne's Letters. Vol. II.

P

I have received a letter from Toulouse which does not comfort my spirits; and I have reason to apprehend from thence, that there is some neglect at the fountain head of my treasury, which I must beg you to inquire into; and, if you see occasion, to correct, in order that the little rill of ways and means may not be interrupted between London and Languedoc, that is, between me and Mrs. Sterne, and my poor dear Lydia.

They write me word that they have drawn upon Foley, as I desired, who tells them he has no effects to answer the bill; but that, if they are in distress, he will accommodate them for my sake. This is very handsome dealing, and I am rather proud of it;—but, in the mean time, there is an uncertainty which is very unpleasant—I mean to the poor women, who are at such a distance, that a great deal of anxious suspense must be suffered before the mistake can be rectified.

Besides, — —, these things breed words and questions, as well as suspicions and all that.—My dear Lydia contents herself with a gentle complaint or so; but her

mother does not hesitate to discharge a volume of reproaches. Now the truth is, that I deserve neither the one nor the other,—and had managed the matter for the supply of their wants, and the ridding myself of all future anxiety in the business, in as plain a manner as my hand-writing and spirit of calculation could make it. However, it has abated the ardour of my Knight Errantry for the present, and thrown more than a sickly thought or two on my imagination.

I am prodigal of words, my dear friend, in a matter wherein a mere hint is all that would be necessary for you to exert yourself. So do me the honour to see that it is absolutely done without a moment's delay; and if B — — should hesitate the tythe of an instant,—do that for me, my friend, which I would do for you on a similar occasion. So God bless you. My heart will not suffer me to offer you an apology, because I know it will be ungracious to you. Once more farewell!

Most cordially yours,

L. STERNE.

LETTER XV.

TO —, ESQ.

Coxwold, Wednesday Evening.

I HAVE received the letter which you informed me I should receive from Doctor L—, and return you both my best thanks for it. He is certainly a man of learning, and an excellent critic, and would do well to employ his leisure hours on Virgil; or rather, if I understand him well, on Horace; and he would give us such a commentary on both those authors, as we have not, and, perhaps, may never have, if he does not set about it.

But Trifram Shandy, my friend, was made and formed to baffle all criticism:—and I will venture to rest the book on this ground, that it is either above the power or beneath the attention of any critic or hypercritic whatsoever. I did not fashion it according to any rule. I rest my fancy, or my genius, or my feeling, call it what you may, to its own free course, without a single intruding reflection, that there ever

had been such a man as Aristotle in the world.

When I mounted my hobby horse, I never thought, or pretended to think, where I was going, or whether I should return home to dinner or supper, or the next day, or the next week. I let him take his own course; and amble, or curvet, or trot, or go a sober, sorrowful, lackadayfical pace, as it pleased him best. It was all one to me, for my temper was ever in unison with his manner of courting it—be it what it might, I never pricked him with a spur, or struck him with a whip; but let the rein lay loosely on his neck, and he was wont to take his way without doing injury to any one.

Some would laugh at us as we passed along, and some seemed to pity us, and now and then a melancholy tender hearted passenger would look at us and heave a sigh.—Thus have we travelled together; but my poor Rosinante did not, like Balaam's ass, stand still if he saw an Angel in the way, but directly pushed up to her, and if it were but a damsel, sitting by a fountain, who would let me take a re-

refreshing draught from her cup, she was, surely, an angel to me.

The grand error of life is, that we look too far:—we scale the Heavens, we dig down to the centre of the earth, for systems, and we forget ourselves.—Truth lies before us; it is in the highway path; and the ploughman treads on it with his clouted shoon.

Nature defies the rule and the line;—Art raises its structures, and forms its works on their aid; but Nature has her own laws, which Art cannot always comprehend, and Criticism can never reach.

Doctor L— — acknowledges, however, that my *Sermon on Conscience* is a most admirable composition; but is of opinion, that it is degraded by being made a part of Trifram Shandy.—Now, if you please, be so good as to note my answer: if this sermon is so excellent, and I myself believe it to be so, because Judge Burnet, who was a man of taste and erudition, as well as law, desired me to print it:—I say, if it be a good sermon, it ought to be read: and since it appeared in the pages of Trifram Shandy, it has been read by thou-

sands and tens of thousands; whereas the fact is, that when it was published by itself, it was read by no one.

I have answered Doctor L—— with all the respect which his amiable character and admirable talents deserve; but I have told him, at the same time, that my book was not written to be tried by any known laws of scholastic criticism; and that if I thought any thing I might hereafter write would be within their reach, I would throw the manuscript that is now before me into the fire, and never dip my pen into my ink-stand again, but for the purpose of assuring some uncritical and uncriticising friend, like yourself, of my sincere and cordial regard. At this moment I make that offering to you.—So God be with you.

L. STERNE.

I begin to peep out of my hermitage a little; for Lord and Lady F—— are come down, and bring with them, as usual, a large store of amiable, easy, and hospitable virtues. I wish you were here to partake of and add to them.

LETTER XVI.

TO —, ESQ.

Monday evening.

YOU have hit my fancy most wonderfully, in the account you have given me of Lady —. The *Juno* character not only prevails, but absolutely predominates.—The *Minerva* qualities are all secondary;—and, as to any *Cyprian* dispositions, I know nothing about them.

She certainly possesses a very good understanding, and is not without attainments; but both the one and the other derive all their consequence from her manners. She has somewhat of an imperious disposition, which would be either silently despised by some, or violently opposed on others, if they did not give a grace to it that annihilates any unpleasant sensation that might attempt to rise in the breast of any by-stander; or which is better, by-fitter; but this is not all, for it calls forth also that kind of respectful submission, which does not lessen us in our own opinion for having practised it.

I never in my life felt the merit of exterior decoration so much as in my conversations and communications with this Lady; and I really do not know any position in the present school of fashion, where a young man might learn so much as in her drawing-room, or without meaning any mischievous equivocal, her dressing room. It is really no common satisfaction to me to reflect that my young friend is an *Eleve* of such an instructress.

There is a time and circumstance of life, and that period and circumstance are now your's, when nothing but the easy society and little tender friendships of an accomplished woman are wanting to render a character complete:—and, without saying a word more than I think on the business, I cannot but express my satisfaction that you are in such hands as will probably produce the very effects which so sincere a friend as myself can wish and desire.

It has ever been a maxim with me, since I knew any thing of the world, that we are all of us as much in want of a school-mistress at the end, as we do at the commencement of our education. And as you

are so fortunate as to have Lady——to teach you the *horn-book* of high life, you will bid fair to spell it and put it together, so as to become the charm of all society;—and you will lose, what I so much wish you to lose,—the attention to one and the neglect of the many, which, though there may be something amiable in the principle, is not adapted to the general intercourse of life.

Lady M—F—might forward the business,—and Lady C—, I am sure, is ready to do it: so that in such a soil,—in such a season, and with such cultivation—what has not partial friendship a right to expect!—And now, what can I do better than leave you in such good and excellent company; and desire you, in return, to present my respectful compliments to them all,—and to receive yourself the most cordial regard

Of your very sincere and affectionate,

L. STERNE.

L E T T E R XVII.

TO —, ESQ.

Coxwold, Wednesday noon.

I UNDERSTAND, from Mr. Phipps*), that you are absolutely engaged to pass the summer, or rather the autumn, with him at Mulgrave-hall; so that I now consider a previous visit to me as a matter on which I may depend, and to which, believe me, I look, with real satisfaction.—We will while away a month or six weeks at my vicarage, in a manner which, I trust, will not be unpleasing or unprofitable to you.

However, in saying this, or rather writing it, I address myself to the excellence of your heart, which I cannot enough admire, and that cultivated understanding, of which I have the greatest hopes. I know the pleasures you will quit, and the Societies you must sacrifice, to come and pass any part of the summer with me: but, at the same time, I do not doubt of your visit—

*) The late Lord Mulgrave.

and that a sudden *tête-à-tête* has its charms for you.

I remember a circumstance, which I shall never think of without the utmost pride in myself, and the most sincere affection for you;—but, besides that it flattered me in the highest degree, it proved that you possessed a source of sentiment, which, whatever may befall you in life, must preserve you in honour and happiness. With such a delicious quality, misfortune will never be able to bear you down; nor will folly, passion, or even vice, though they may for a time obscure or lessen the excellence of your character, possess the power of destroying it.

I allude to a little touch of sentiment that escaped you last winter, which, though I have mentioned it, with every possible eulogium, to others, again and again, I have never before hinted it even to you.

The moment, however, is now come, when my spirit urges me to speak of it, and I do it with those dispositions which are congenial to the subject, and, I trust, natural to myself.

You cannot absolutely have forgotten

an evening visit which you paid me last January, in Bondstreet, when I was ill in bed, nor ought it to escape your occasional reflection, that you sat by my bed side the whole night, performing every act of the most friendly and pious attention. I then thought that the scare-crow death was at my heels; nay, I thought the villain had got me by the throat, and I told you as much. However, it pleased Heaven that I should not be snatched from the world at that moment; though I spoke my own honest opinion, when I vaticinated my destiny by expressing little hopes of getting to the winter's end.—I believe, my dear friend, said I, that I shall soon be off.—I hope not, you replied, with a squeeze of my hand, and a sigh of your heart, which went to the very bottom of mine;—but, you were pleased to add, lest that should be the case, I hope you will do me the favour to let me be always with you, that I may have every atom of advantage and comfort your society will afford me, while Heaven permits it to last. I spoke no reply, for I could not, but my heart made one then, and will con-

tinue to do so, till it is become a *clod of the valley*.

Hence it is that I do not doubt but you will quit the ring of pleasure, without regret, to come and sit with me beneath my honey-suckle, which is now flaunting like a Ranelagh beauty, and accompany me in paying my nuns their penfive evening visit. We can go to Vespers with them, and return home to our curds and cream with more delicious sentiments, than all the pleasures of the world and the beauties thereof, in their vaineft moments, will pretend to afford.

I am busy about another couple of volumes to amuse, and, as I hope, to instruct a gouty and a splenetic world; in which I solemnly declare I have no ambition to remain, but for the love I bear to such friends as you; and, perhaps the vanity which I am vain enough not to call an idle one, of adding a few more leaves to the wreath which I have been able to weave for my own little glory.

Come then, and let me read the pages to you as they fall from my pen; and be a *Mentor* to *Tristram*, as you have been

to *Yorick*.—At all events, I am sure you cannot come to York without coming to me; and I shall triumph completely over Lady — —, if I draw you for a month from the bright centre to which you are so naturally attracted. So God bless you, and believe me, with all sincerity, to be most affectionately yours,

L. STERNE.

LETTER XVIII.

TO — — —.

Bishopthorp, Thursday night.

I SAW the charming Mrs. Vesey but for a moment, and she contrived with her voice and her thousand other graces, to *disorder* me: and what she will have to answer for on the occasion, I shall not employ my casuistry to determine; nor shall I ask my good friend the Archbishop, from whose house, and amidst whose kindness and hospitality, I address this to you.

I envy, however, your saunter together round an *empty* Ranelagh; and I should have liked it the better, because it was

empty, and would give the imagination, and very delicious feeling, opportunity to make one forget there was another being in the room but ourselves.

You will, I am sure, more than understand me, when I mention that sense of female perfection—I mean, however, when the female is sitting or walking beside you—which so possesses the mind, that the whole globe seems to be occupied by none but you two. When your hearts, in perfect unison, or, I should rather say, harmony with each other, produce the same chords, and blossom with the same flowers of thought and sentiment.

These hours—which virtuous, tender minds have power of separating from the melancholy seasons of life—make ample amends for the weight of cares and disappointments which the happiest of us are doomed to bear. They cast the brightest sunshine on the dreary landscape; and form a kind of refuge from the stormy wind and tempest.

With such a companion, is not the primrose bank, and cottage, which humble virtue has raised on its side, superior to

all that splendour and wealth have formed in the palaces of Monarchs? The scented heath is then the *perfumed Araby*; and though the nightingale should refuse to lodge among the branches of the poor solitary tree that overshadows us—if my fair minstrel should but pour forth the melting strain, I would not look to the music of the spheres for ravishment.

There is something, my dear friend, most wonderfully pleasant in the idea of getting away from the world; and, though I have ever found it a great comfort, yet I have been more vain of the business, when I have done it in the midst of the world. But this *aberration* from the crowd, while you are surrounded and pressed by it, is only to be accomplished by the magic of female perfection.—Friendship, with all its powers—mere friendship cannot do it. A more refined sentiment must employ its influence, to wrap the heart in this delicious oblivion. It is too pleasing to last long; for envious, sleepless care, is ever on the watch to awaken us from the bewitching trance.

You, my friend, possess something of the reality of it: and I, while I enjoy your happiness, apply to fancy for the purpose of creating a copy of it. So I sit myself down upon the turf, and place a lovely fair one by my side—as lovely, if possible, as Mrs. P—, and having plucked up a sprig of blossoms from the May bush, I place it in her bosom, and then address some tender tale to her heart; and if she weeps at my story, I take the white handkerchief she holds in her hand, and wipe the tears from off her cheek, and then I dry my own with it, and thus the delightful vision gives wing to a lazy hour, calms my spirits, and composes me for my pillow.

To wish that care may never plant a thorn upon yours, would be an idle employment of votive regard; but that you may preserve the virtue which will blunt their points; and continue to possess the feelings which will, sometimes, pluck them away, is a wish not unworthy of that regard, with which I am, your most affectionate,

L. STERNE.

LETTER XIX.

TO — — —.

Sunday Evening.

DO not imagine, my dear fellow—and do not suffer, I beseech you, any pedantic, cold-hearted fellow to persuade you—that *sensibility is an evil*. You may take my word on this subject, as you have been pleased to do on many others—that sensibility is one of the best blessings of life—as well as the brightest ornament of the human character.

You do not explain matters to me, which, by the bye, is not fair; but I suppose, from the tenour of your letter, which is now beside me, that you have been made a dupe of by some artful person—who, I am disposed to think, is some *cunning baggage*—and that, under the impressions of this game that has been played you, your vanity is alarmed, and your understanding piqued; and then you lay all this dire grievance, in a very pettish manner, let me tell you, at the door

of your sensibility. And, which is worse than all the rest, you write to me as if you really believed yourself to be in earnest, in all the see-saw observations you have written to me on the subject.

Be assured, my dear friend—If I thought the sentiments of your last letter were not the sentiments of a sickly moment—if I could be made to believe, for an instant, that they proceeded from you, in a sober, reflecting condition of your mind—I should give you over as incurable, and give up all my hopes of your rising into that proud honour, and brilliant reputation, which, I trust, you will one day possess.

I was almost going to write—and wherefore should I not—that there is an amiable kind of *cullibility*, which is as superior to the slow precaution of wordly wisdom, as the sound of *Abel's Viol di Gamba* to the braying of an ass on the other side of my paling.

If I should, at any time, hear a man pique himself upon never having been a dupe—I should grievously suspect, that such an one will, some time or other, give cause to be thought, at best, a mean-spirited, dirty rascal.

You may think this a strange doctrine—but, be that as it may—I am not ashamed to adopt it.—What would you say of any character, who had neither humanity, generosity, nor confidence?—Why you would say, I know you would—such a man

Is fit for treasons, stratagems, and spoils—

And yet imposition, dupery—deception—call it by what name you will, attends upon these virtues like their shadow. For virtue, my dear friend, like every other possession in this world, though it is the most valuable of all—is of a mixed nature; and the very inconveniencies of it, if they deserve that name, form the basis on which its importance and natural excellence is established.

Sensibility is oftentimes betrayed into a foolish thing;—but its folly is amiable, and some one or other is the better for it. I am not for its excesses—or a blind submission to its impulse, which produces them;—yet some how or other, I should be strongly disposed to hug the being, who would take the rag off his back—to place

it on the shivering wretch who had naught to cover him.

Discretion is a cold quality—but I have no objection to the possessing as much of it—as will direct your finer feelings to their proper objects;—but here let its office finish;—if it proceeds a step further—there may be mischief:—it may cool that current which is the life-blood of all virtue, and will, I trust, warm your heart, till it is become a clod of the valley.

Sensibility is the source of those delicious feelings which give a brighter colour to our joys, and turn our tears to rapture.—Though it may now and then lead us into a scrape, as we pass through life—you may be assured, my dear friend, it will get us out of them all, *at the end of it*;—and that it is a matter which wiser men than myself will tell you, is well worth thinking about.

So leaving you to your contemplations—and wishing them, and every thing you do, an happy issue—I remain, with great truth,

Your affectionate,

L. STERNE.

LETTER XX.

TO — — —.

Bond-street, Thursday Morning.

So, my dear friend, you are pleased to be very angry with the Reviewers;—so am not I. But as your displeasure proceeds from your regard for me, I thank you, as I ought to do—again and again.

I really do not know to whom I am personally indebted for so much obliging illiberality. Nor can I tell, whether it is the society at large, or a splenetic individual, to whom I am to acknowledge my obligation. I have never inquired who it is, or who they are: and if I know him or them, what would it signify? and wherefore should I give their names immortality in my writings, which they will never find in their own.—Let the asses bray as they like; I shall treat their worships as they deserve, in my own way and manner, and in a way and manner that they will like less than any other.

There is a certain race of people who

are ever aiming to treat their betters in some scurvy way or other; but it has ever been a practice with me, not to mind a little dirt thrown upon my coat, so that I keep my *lining unrumped*.—And so much for that envy, ignorance, and ill-nature, for which, what I have written is far too much.

I am rejoiced, however, for twenty good reasons, which I will tell you hereafter, that London lies in your way between Oxfordshire and Suffolk, and one of them I will tell you now—which is, that you can be of very great service to me; so I would desire you to prepare yourself to do me a kindness, if I did not know that you are always in such a state of preparation.

The town is so empty, that though I have been in it full four and twenty hours, I have seen only three people I know—Foote on the stage—Sir Charles Davers, at St. James's Coffee-house, and Williams, who was an hasty bird of passage, on his flight to Bright-helmstone, where I am told he is making love in right earnest, and to a very fine woman, and with all the suc-

cells his friends can wish him. Our races at York were every thing we could desire them to be in the Ballroom, and every thing we did not desire them to be on the ground. The rain said nay, with a vengeance, to the sports of the course, for all the water-spouts of the heavens seemed to be let loose upon it. However, in the amusements *under cover*, we were all as merry as heart could wish. I had promised a certain person that you should be there, and was obliged to parry a score or two of reproaches on your account.

But, though I forgot to tell it you before, I am by no means well, and if I do not get away from this climate before winter sets in, I shall never see another spring in this world; and it is to forward my journey to the South, that I request you to make haste to me from the West.

Alas, alas, my friend, I begin to feel that I lose strength in these annual struggles and encounters with that miserable scarecrow, who knows as well as I do, that, do what I can, he will finally get the better of me, and all of us. Indeed he has already beat the vizard from my helmet,

and the point of my spear is not as it was wont to be. But while it pleases heaven to grant me life, it will, I trust, grant me spirits to bear up against the sawey circumstances of it, and preserve, to my last separating sigh, that sensibility to whatever is kind and gracious, which, when once it possesses the heart, makes, I trust, ample amends for a large portion of human error.

You may, indeed, believe, that while I am sensible of any thing, I shall be sensible of your friendship; and I have every reason to think, that should my term be drawing nigh to its period, you will continue to love me while I live, and when I am no more, to cherish the memory of

Your ever faithful and affectionate,

L. STERNE.

L E T T E R XXI.

TO ----.

Sunday Morning.

IF you wish to have the representation of my spare, meagre form, which, by the

bye, is not worth the canvas it must be painted on, you shall be most welcome to it; and I am happy in the reflection, that when my bones shall be laid low, there may be any resemblance of me, which may recall my image to your friendly and sympathizing recollection.

But you must mention the business to Reynolds yourself; for I will tell you why I cannot. He has already painted a very excellent portrait of me, which, when I went to pay him for, he desired me to accept, as a tribute, to use his own elegant and flattering expression, that his art wished to pay to my genius—That man's way of thinking and manners are, at least, equal to his pencil.

You will see, therefore, the delicacy of my situation, as well as the necessity, if the genius of Reynolds is to be employed in the business, of your taking it entirely upon yourself. Or if your friendly impatience, which you express with so much kindness, will let you wait till we make our tour to Bath, your favourite Gainsborough may do the deed.

Or why not your little friend Cosway,

who is rising fast into fame and fortune. But be it as you please, and arrange it according to your own fancy.

At all events, I shall treat myself when I get to Rome with my own busto, if Nollikens does not make a demand for it that may be inconsistent with my Exchequer. The statuary decorations of my grandfather the Archbishop's monument, in the Cathedral at York, which you admire so much, have given birth, I believe, to this whim of mine; and this piece of marble, which my vanity—for let it be vanity if you please—desires for myself, may be placed by the hand of friendship, and by your's perhaps, near my grave—and so much for that.

But I was born for digressions, and I, therefore, tell you at once, not rashly, or prematurely, but with all due sobriety and reflection, that Lord——is of a low, base, pimping nature. If he had been nothing but a fool, I should have said—Have mercy upon him; but he has just understanding sufficient to make him answerable for what he does, and not sufficient to perceive the superiority of what

is great over what is little.—If ever that man rises into a good or a noble action, I would be bound to be considered as a retailer of scandal, and an ill-natured man, as long as I live, and as long as my memory lives; but no more of him, I beseech you—and the hour tells me to write no more of any thing; for I must hasten where I ought to have been half an hour ago—so God bless you, and believe me, wherever I am, to be

Most cordially your's,

L. STERNE.

LETTER XXII.

TO -----.

Monday Morning.

THE story, my dear friend, which you heard related with such an air of authority, is like many other true stories, absolutely false. Mr. Hume and I never had a dispute, I mean a serious, angry, or petulant dispute, in our lives:—indeed, I should be most exceedingly surprised to hear that David ever had an unpleasant

contention with any man?—and if I should be made to believe that such an event had happened, nothing would persuade me that his opponent was not in the wrong: for, in my life, did I never meet with a being of a more placid and gentle nature; and it is this amiable turn of his character, that has given more consequence and force to his scepticism, than all the arguments of his sophistry. You may depend on this as a truth.

We had, I remember well, a little pleasant sparring at Lord Hertford's table at Paris: but there was nothing in it that did not bear the marks of good-will and urbanity on both sides. I had preached that very day at the Ambassador's chapel, and David was disposed to make a little merriness with the *parson*; and, in return, the parson was equally disposed to make a little merry with the *infidel*; we laughed with one another, and the company laughed with us both, and whatever your informer might pretend, he certainly was not one of that company.

As for his other history, that I preached an offensive sermon at the Ambassa-

dor's chapel—it is equally founded in truth; for Lord Hertford did me the honour to thank me for it again and again. The *text*, I will own, was an *unlucky* one; and that was all your informer could have heard to have justified his report. If he fell asleep immediately after I repeated it, I will forgive him.

The fact was as follows:

Lord Hertford had just taken and furnished a magnificent hotel; and as every thing and any thing gives the fashion of the moment at Paris, it had been the fashion for every one to go and see the English Ambassador's new hotel.—It occupied the curiosity, formed the amusement, and gave a subject of conversation to the polite circles of Paris, for a fortnight at least.

Now it fell to my lot, that is to say, I was requested to preach; the first day's service was performed in the chapel of this new hotel. The message was brought me when I was playing a sober game of Whist with the Thornhills, and whether it was that I was called rather abruptly from my afternoon's amusement to pre-

pare myself for this business, for it was to be on the next day; or from what other cause I do not pretend to determine; but that unlucky kind of fit seized me, which you know I can never resist, and a very unlucky text did come into my head, and you will say so when you read it.

„And Hezekiah said unto the prophet, I have shewn them my vessels of gold, and my vessels of silver, and my wives, and my concubines, and my boxes of ointment, and whatever I have in my house have I shewn unto them; and the prophet said unto Hezekiah, Thou hast done very foolishly.” *)

Now, as the text is a part of holy writ, that could not give offence; though wicked wits are sometimes disposed to ill treat it with their own scurvy misrepresentations. But as to the discourse itself, nothing could be more innocent, and David Hume favoured it with his grace and approbation.

But here am I got, I know not how,

*) This sermon has been published, and is to be found in Mr. Sterne's works.

writing about myself for whole pages together—whereas the only part of my letters that can justify my being an egotist, is, while I assure any gentle spirit, or faithful friend, as I now do you, that I am her, or his, or your

Most affectionate humble servant,

L. STERNE.

LETTER XXIII.

TO ———.

Wednesday Noon.

BELIEVE me, my dear friend, I have no great faith in Doctors. Some eminent ones of the faculty have assured me, many years ago, that if I continued to do as I was then doing, I should not live three months. Now the fact is, that I have been doing exactly what they told me I ought not to do for thirteen years together—and here I am, as thin, it is true, but as saucy as ever; and it will not be my fault if I do not continue to give them the lie for another period of equal duration.

It is Lord Bacon, I think, who observes

—at least be it who it may that made the observation, it is not unworthy the great man whose name I have just written—That Physicians are old women, who sit by your bed-side till they kill you, or Nature cures you.

There is an uncertainty in the business that often baffles experience, and renders genius abortive—Tho' I mean not, believe me, to be severe on a science which is sometimes made the means of doing good. Nay, the science itself considered, naturally and physically, is the eye of all the rest. But I do not always hold my peace when I reflect on those self-conceited, upstart professors of it, who fly and bounce, and give themselves airs,—if you do not read the directions upon the label of a phial which contains the matter of their prescriptions with as much reverence, as if it had been penned by St. Luke himself.

Goddeſs of Health—let me drink thy healing and ſuſtaining beverage at the pure fountain which flows at thy command! Give me to breathe the balmy air, and to feel the enlivening ſun—and ſo I will!—for if I do not ſee you in fifteen days, I

will, on the sixteenth step quietly into the Dover coach, and proceed without you to the banks of the Rhone, where you may follow me if you please—and if you do not, the difference between us will be—that while you are passing your Christmas day in fencing against fogs, by warm clothes and large fires, I shall be sitting on the grass, courting no warmth but the all-cheering one which proceeds from the grand luminary of nature.

So think on these things I beseech you—and let me know about it, for I will not remain gasping another month in London, even for your sake—or for your company, which, I might add, would be for my own sake.

In the mean time, and at all times, may God bless you.

I am, most cordially, your's,

L. STERNE.

LETTER XXIV.

TO ———.

Wednesday Noon.

I AM always getting into a scrape, not from a carelessness of offending, as some good-humoured people have suspected; for I do not wish to give offence, but from the want of being understood—Pope has well expressed the hardship of being forced

—— to trudge

Without a second and without a judge.

I think the quotation is correct. Indeed, a man may proceed well enough without a second. Genius is oftentimes so far from wanting such an assistant, that it is frequently clogged by it; but to be without a judge is a mortification which comes home with much severity to the bosoms of those who feel, or fancy, which is pretty near the same thing; and judgment, I mean impartial, adequate judgment, would be their reward.

To be eternally misunderstood, and which naturally follows, to be eternally misrepresented by ignorance, is far, far worse than to be slandered by malice. Calumny is more than oftentimes, for it is almost always the sacrifice which vice pays to virtue, and folly offers up to wisdom. A wise man, while he pities the efforts of slander, will feel a kind of consequence from the exertion of them—like the Philosopher, who is said to have raised a monument to his own fame, with the stones, which the malignity of his competitors had thrown at him.

The divorce between virtue and reputation is too common to be wondered at—though it is too unjust not to be lamented; but that being a circumstance which connects itself with something like the general order of Providence—we are able to console ourselves under it, by hope and resignation. But in the little, and comparatively speaking, the petty business of human fame—the mind may be justified in kicking at the perversions to which its honest and best endeavours are so continually subject.

I do most sincerely assure you, that I have seldom been so proud of myself and the little display of my talents, whatever they may be—as I was in the very circumstance which has given so much uneasiness. I intended no severity—I was all complacency and good humour—my spirits were in unison with every generous and gracious thought; and, so far was I from possessing the idea of giving offence—and to a *Lady*—that there never was a moment of my life, perhaps, when I was so disposed to buckle on my armour, and mount my *Rosinante*, to go and fight the cause of injured or captive beauty. But, instead of all this, here am I considered as the very monster whom I myself was ready to combat and to destroy.

You will, therefore, be so good as to communicate these thoughts, in as much better a manner as you please, to Mrs. H——, and assure her, that she has only done what so many have done before her—that is, she has *misconceived*, or, as that word may produce a *misconception*, she has *misunderstood* me.

So far I am most willing to travel in

the highway of apology, and, if she is disposed to smile, I will receive her returning favour, with all due acknowledgments; but if she should think it clever, or witty, or consequential, to continue to be offended, I will not fail to remember her in a postscript to my chapter on the right and wrong end of a woman; which, though my uncle Toby, from a certain combination of circumstances could never be made to understand, I will explain to the world in such a manner, that they who run may read.

I am not, however, unintelligible to all. There are some spirits who want no key either to my speech or my writings: and they, I mean the spirits, are of the first order. This is some comfort, and that comfort increases both in its weight and measures, on the reflection that you are one of them.

But my paper and the postman's bell both warm me to do—what I ought to have done at least a page ago, and that is to write adieu; so adieu, and God bless you.

I am most cordially yours,

L. STERNE.

LETTER XXV.

TO ———.

Thursday, Nov. 1.

WERE I a Minister of State, instead of being a Country Parson—or rather, though I do not know that it is the better thing of the two—were I King of a Country, not like Sancho Pancha, without a will of my own, but with all the rights, privileges, and immunities, belonging to such a situation, I would not suffer a man of genius to be pulled to pieces, or pulled down, or even whifled at, by any man who had not some sort of genius of his own—that is to say, I would not suffer blockheads of any denomination to shew their heads in my territories.

What—will you say—is there no saving clause for the ignorant and the unlettered?—No spot set apart for those on whom science has not beamed, or the current of whose genius poverty has frozen?—My dear friend, you do not quite understand me, and I beg of you not to suppose that

all men are *blockheads* who are not *learned*—and that no man who is *learned* can be a *blockhead*.

My definition is not borrowed from the common room of a College, or the dull muzzing *pericranium* of a word-mongering dictionary-maker, but from the book of Nature, the volume of the world, and the pandects of experience. There I find a *blockhead* to be a man, (for I am not at present in a humour to involve the poor women in the definition) who thinks he has what, in fact, he has not—and who does not know how to make a right use of that which he has.

It is the mode of applying *means* to *ends* that marks the character of superior understanding.—The poor scare-crow of a beast that *Yorick* rode so long and to the last, being once set in the right road, will sooner get to the end of his journey, than the fleetest racehorse of Newmarket, who has taken an opposite direction.

Wisdom very often cannot read or write, and *Folly* will often quote you passages from all the *dead* and half the living languages. I beg, therefore, you will not form

a bad, that is to say a false idea of this kingdom of mine—for whenever I get it, you may be sure of being well appointed, and living at your ease, as every one must do *there* who lives to his honour—But to the point.

To the point, did I say?—Alas! there is so much *zig-zag* in my destiny, that it is impossible for me to keep going on straight through one poor letter—and that to a friend. But so it is—for here is a visitor arrived to whom I cannot say nay—and who obliges me to write adieu, a page or two, or three, perhaps, before I intended to do it. I must therefore fold up my paper as it is—and shall only add, God bless you—which, however, is the constant and sincerest wish of

Your affectionate,

L. STERNE.

LETTER XXVI.

TO -----.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

Dijon, Nov. 9. 1765.

I RECOMMEND it to you, not, perhaps, above all things, but very assuredly above most things, to stick to your own understanding a little more than you do; for, believe me, an ounce of it will answer your purpose better than a pound weight of other people's. There is a certain timidity which renders early life amiable, as a matter of speculation; but is very inconvenient indeed, not to say dangerous, according to the present humour of the world, in matters of practice.

There is a manly confidence, which, as it springs from a consciousness of possessing certain excellent qualities and valuable attainments, we cannot have too early; and there is no more impropriety in offering manifestations of it to the world, than the putting on your helmet in the day of battle. We want it as a protection—I say

as a protection from the insults and injuries of others; for in your particular circumstances I consider it merely as a defensive quality—to prevent you from being run down or run over by the first ignorant blockhead or insolent coxcomb, who perceives your modesty to be a restraint on your spirit.

But this by the way—The application of it is left to your own discernment and good sense, of which I shall not write what I think, and what some others think, whose testimony will wear well.

I am so much better since I set my foot on the Continent, that it would do you good to see—and more good still to hear me; for I have recovered my voice in this genial climate; and so far am I now from finding a difficulty to make myself heard across the table, that I am almost fit to preach in a cathedral.

Here they are all hey-go mad—The vintage has been abundant, and is now at the close. Every eye beams delight, and every voice is attuned to joy—Though I am running away as fast as I can well go, and am withal so pressed by the rascal,

that I ought not in prudence to take time to look behind me; yet cannot I resist the temptation of getting out of my chaise, and sitting for a whole evening on a bank, to see these happy people dance away the labours of the day: and thus they contrive, for two or three hours at least out of the four-and-twenty, *to forget*, God bless 'em, that there are such things as labour and care in the world.

This innocent oblivion of sorrow is one of the happiest arts of life; and philosophy, in all its store-house of human remedies, has nothing like unto it. Indeed, I am persuaded that mirth, a sober, well-regulated mirth, is perfectly acceptable to the kind Being that made us; and that a man may laugh and sing, and dance too—and, after all, go to heaven.

I never could, and I never can, nay, I positively never will believe that we were sent into this world to go sorrowing through it. On the contrary, every object around me—the rural dance, and the rustic minstrelsy, that I behold and hear from my window, tell me that man is framed for joy. Nor shall any crack-brained Carthusian

Monk, or all the Carthusian Monks in the world, persuade me to the contrary.

Swift says, *vive la bagatelle*. I say, *vive la joie*; which I am sure is no *bagatelle*, but, as I take it, a very *serious thing*, and the first of human possessions.

May your treasury, my dear friend, continue to have good store of it—and, like the *widow's cruse*, may it fail not!

At Lyons I expect to find some tidings of you, and from thence I will dispatch some further tidings of myself. So, in the mean time, and at all times, may God bless you.—Believe me,

I shall ever remain most truly

And affectionately your's;

L. STERNE.

LETTER XXVII.

TO ———.

Lyons, Nov. 15.

I HAVE travelled hither most deliciously—though I have made my journey in a *désobligeant*, and, of course, alone. But when the heart is at rest, and the mind

is in harmony with itself, and every subordinate feeling is well attuned, not an object offers itself to the attention but may be made to produce pleasure. Besides, such is the character of this happy people, that you see a smile on every countenance, and hear the notes of joy from every tongue. There is an old woman, at this moment, playing on the viol before my window, and a groupe of young people are dancing to it, with more appearance, and, I believe, more *reality* of pleasure, than all your brilliant assemblies at *Almack's* can boast.

I love my country as well as any of her children; and I know the solid, characteristic virtues of its people; but they do not play the game of happiness with that attention of success which is practised and obtained here. I shall not enter into the physical or moral difference between the two nations—but I cannot, however, help observing, that while the French possess a gaiety of heart, that always weakens and sometimes baffles sorrow, the English still answer to the description of the *old* Frenchman, and really continue to divert themselves *most tristement*.

Nay, how often have I seen at a *York Assembly*, two young people dance down thirty couple, with as grave countenances as if they did it for hire, and were, after all, not sure of being paid: and here have I beheld the sun-burnt sons and daughters of labour rise from their scanty meal with not a pulse in their hearts that did not bear to pleasure; and with the brightest looks of satisfaction, make their wooden shoes responsive to the sound of a broken-winded hautboy.

All the world shall never persuade me there is not a Providence, and a gracious one too, which governs it. With every blessing under the sun we look grave, and reason ourselves into dissatisfaction; while here— with scarce any blessing *but the sun*—*on est content de son état.*

But the kind Being who made us all gives to each the portion of happiness, according to his wife and good pleasure; for no one—and nothing is beneath his all-providential care—he even tempers the wind to the shorn lamb.

By such reflections, and under such influences, I am perverted from my pur-

pose; for, when I drew my chair to the table, and dipped my pen into the inkhorn, I breathed nothing but complaint, and it was my sole design to tell you so—for I have sent *à la poste restante* again and again, and there is no letter from you. But though I am impatience itself to continue my journey towards the *Alps*, and cannot possibly indulge my curious spirit till I hear from you, yet such is the effect of my sympathetic nature, that I have caught all the ease and good humour of the people about me, and seem to be sitting here, in my black coat and yellow slippers, as contented as if I had not another step to take; and, God knows, I have a pretty circuit to make, my friend, before I may embrace you again.

It is not, as you well know, my practice to scratch out any thing I write, or I would erase the last dozen lines; as, the very moment I had concluded them, your letter and two others arrived, and brought me every thing I could wish. I would really linger if I thought you would overtake me. At all events, we shall meet at *Rome—at Rome*—and I shall now take the wings

of to-morrow morning to forward my progress thither.

I sincerely hope this paper may be thrown away upon you—that is, I wish you may be come away before it has made its passage to England. At all events, my dear boy, we shall meet at Rome. So till then fare thee well—there and every where I shall be

Your most faithful and affectionate,

L. STERNE,

LETTER XXVIII.

TO ———.

Bond-street.

I HAVE a great mind to have done with joking, laughing, and merry-making, for the rest of my days, with either man, woman, or child; and set up for a grave, formal, see-saw character; and dispense stupid wisdom, as I have hitherto been said to have done sensible nonsense, to my countrymen and countrywomen.

To tell you the truth, I began this letter yesterday morning, and was interrupt-

ed in getting to the end of it by half a dozen idle people, who called upon me to lounge and to laugh; though one of them forced me home with him to dine with his sister, whom I found to be a being of a superior order, and who has absolutely made the something like a resolution with which I began this letter, not worth the feather of the quill with which it was written.

She is, in good faith, charming beyond my powers of description, and we had such an evening as made the cup of tea she gave me more delicious than nectar.

By the bye, she wishes very much to become acquainted with you—not, believe me, from any representations or biography of mine, but from the warm encomiums she has received of you from others, and those, as she says, of the first order. After all this, however, you may be sure that my testimony was not wanting. So that, when you will give me an opportunity, I shall have the honour of presenting you to kiss her hand, and add another devout worshipper at the temple of such transcendent merit.

I am really of opinion, that if there is a woman in the world formed to do you good, and to make you love her into the bargain, which, I believe, is the only way of doing you any good, this is the pre-eminent and bewitching character. Indeed, were you to command my feeble powers to delineate the lovely being whose affections would well repay thee for all the heart-achs and disquieting apprehensions that may and will afflict thee in thy passage through life, it would be this fair and excellent creature. My *Knight Errant* spirit has already told her that she is a *Dulcinea* to me—but I would most willingly take off my armour, and break my spear, and resign her as an *Angel* to you.

I need not say any thing, I trust, of my affection for you: and I have just now some singular ideas on your subject, which kept me awake last night, when I ought to have been sound asleep; but I shall reserve them for the communication of my fire-side or your's, as it may be; and I wish as devoutly as ever I wished any thing in my life, that my fire was to brighten before you this very evening.

In the name of fortune, for want of a better at the moment, what business have you to be fifty leagues from the capital, at a time when I stand so much in need of you, for your own sake.

I hear you exclaim, who is all this about? And I see you half determined to throw my letter into the fire, because you cannot find her name in it. This is all, my good friend, as it ought to be; for you may be assured that I never intended to write her name on this sheet of paper. I have told you of the divinity, and you will find the rest inscribed on the altar.

I was never more serious in my life; so let the wheels of your chariot roll as rapidly as posthorses can make them towards this town; where, if you come not soon, I shall be gone; and then I know not what may become of all my *present* good intentions towards you—future ones, it is true, I shall have in plenty—for, at all events, in all circumstances, and every where, I am,

Most cordially and affectionately

your's,

L. STERNE.

L E T T E R XXIX.

TO — — — —.

Friday.

THESE may be piping times to you, my dear friend, and I rejoice at it—but they are not dancing ones to me.

You will perceive, by the manner in which this letter is written, that if I dance—*Holbein's* piper must be the fiddler.

Since I wrote to you last I have burst another vessel of my lungs, and lost blood enough to pull down a very strong man: what it has done then with my meagre form, clad as it is with infirmities, may be better imagined than described.—Indeed it is with difficulty and some intervals of repose that I can trail on my pen; and, if it were not for the anxious forwardness of *my spirits*, which aids me for a few minutes by its precious mechanism, I should not be able to thank you at all—I know I cannot thank you as I ought, for your four letters, which have remained so long unanswered, and particularly for the last of them.

I really thought, my good friend, that I should have seen you no more. The grim scare-crow seemed to have taken post at the foot of my bed, and I had not strength to laugh him off as I had hitherto done—so I bowed my head in patience, without the least expectation of moving it again from my pillow.

But somehow or other he has, I believe, changed his purpose for the present; and we shall, I trust, embrace once again. I can only add, that, while I live, I shall be
Most affectionately your's,

L. STERNE.

L E T T E R X X X .

TO — — — — .

Bond-street, May 3.

I FELT the full force of an honest heart-ach on reading your last letter.—The story it contains may be placed among the most affecting relations of human calamity, and the happiest efforts of human benevolence. I happened to have it in my pocket yesterday morning when I breakfasted with Mrs.

M — — ; and, for want of something so good of my own, I read the whole of your letter to her—but this is not all ; for, which is more to the purpose (that is, to the purpose of your honour) she desired to read it herself, and then she entreated me not to delay the earliest opportunity to present *you* to her breakfast-table, and the mistress of it to you. I told her of the awkward space of an hundred miles, at least, that lay between us ; but I promised and vowed, for I was obliged to do both, that the moment I could lay hold of your arm, I would lead you to *her vestibule*.—I really begin to think I shall get some credit by you.

Love, I most readily acknowledge, is subject to violent paroxysms as well as slow fevers ; but there is so much pleasure attendant upon the passion in general, and so many amiable sympathies are connected with it ; nay, it is sometimes so suddenly, and oftentimes so easily cured, that I cannot, for the life of me, pity its disasters with the same tone of commiseration which accompanies my consolatory visits to other less ostensible sources of distress.

—In the last sad separation of friends, Hope comforts us with the prospect of an eternal re-union, and Religion encourages the belief of it: but, in the melancholy history which you relate, I behold what has always appeared to me to be the most affecting sight in the gloomy region of human misfortune; I mean the pale countenance of one who has seen better days, and sinks under the despair of seeing them return. The mind that is bowed down by unmerited calamity, and knows not from what point of the compass to expect any good, is in a state over which the Angel of pity sheds all his showers. — *Unable to dig, and to beg ashamed*; what a description! what an object of relief! and how great the rapture to relieve it!

I do not, my dear boy, indeed I do not envy your feelings, for I trust that I share them; but if it were possible for me to envy you any thing that does you so much honour, and makes me love you, if possible, so much better than I did before— it is the little fabric of comfort and happiness which you have erected in the depths of misery. The whole may occupy, per-

haps, but little space in this world—but, like the grain of mustard seed, it will grow up and rear its head towards that Heaven, to which the Spirit that planted it will finally conduct you.

Robinson called upon me yesterday, to take me to dinner in Berkeley-square; and while I was arranging my drapery, I gave him your letter to read. He felt it as he ought, and not only desired me to say every handsome thing on his part to you, but he said a great many handsome things of you himself, during dinner and after it, and drank your health. Nay, as his wine warmed him, he talked aloud, and threatened to drink water the rest of his days.

But while I am relating so many fine things to flatter *your vanity*, let me, I beseech you, mention something on the part of my own; which is nothing more or less than a very elegant silver standish, with a motto engraved upon it, which has been sent me by Lord Spencer. This mark of that nobleman's good disposition towards me, was displayed in a manner which enhanced the value of the gift, and heightened my sense of the obligation. I

could not thank him for it as I ought, but I wrote my acknowledgments as well as I could, and promised his Lordship that, as it was a piece of plate the Shandy family would value the most, it should certainly be the last they will part with.

I had another little business or two to communicate to you, but the postman's bell warns me to write adieu; so God bless you, and preserve you as you are—and this wish, by the bye, is saying no small matter in your favour; but it is addressed for and to you with the same truth that guides my pen in assuring you that I am most sincerely and cordially your faithful friend.

L. STERNE.

L E T T E R XXXI.

TO ———.

Bond-street.

THERE is a certain pliability of the affections, my dear friend, which, with all its conveniences, and I will acknowledge a thousand, forms a wonderful charm in

the human character.—To become a dupe to others, who are almost always worse, and, very often, more ignorant than yourself, is not only mortifying to one's pride, but frequently destructive to one's fortune. Nevertheless there is something in the very face, and, which is worse, in the mind of suspicion, of such a detestable complexion and character, that I could never bear it; and whenever I have observed mistrust in the heart, I would never rap at the door of it, even to pay, if I could help it, a morning visit, much less to take my lodging there.

Niger est, hunc tu Romane caveto.

This sort of cullibility most certainly lays you open to the designs of knaves and rascals; and they are, alas! to be found in the hedges and highway sides, and will come in without the trouble of sending for them. — The happy mean between mad good-nature and mean self-love is of difficult attainment;—though Mr. Pope says, that Lord Bathurst possessed it in an eminent degree, and I believe it. Indeed, it is for my honour that I should believe it, as I have received much kindness, and

many generous attentions from the venerable and excellent nobleman;—as I never possessed this happy quality myself, I can only recommend it to you, without offering any instructions on a duty, of which I cannot offer myself as an example.—This is not altogether clerical—I mean as clergymen do—but no matter.

—B—is exactly one of these harmless, inoffensive people, who never frets or fumes, but bears all his losses with a most Christian patience, and settles the account in this manner, that he had rather lose any thing than that benevolence of disposition which forms the happiness of his life. But how will all this end?—for you know as I know, that when once you have won his good opinion, you may impose upon him ten times a day, if nine did not suit your purpose. The real friends of virtue, of honour, and what is best in the human character, should form a phalanx round such a man, and preserve him from the harpy plottings of sharpers and villains.

But there is another species of cullibility that I never can be brought to pity, which arises from the continual aim to make culls

of others. It is not that gentle, confidential, unsuspicious spirit, which I have already hinted to you, but an overweening, wicked, insidious disposition, which, by being continually engaged in the miserable business of deceiving others, either outwits itself, or is outwitted by the very objects of its own fallacious intentions.

There is not, believe me, a more strait way to the being a dupe yourself, than the resting your hopes or pleasure *in making dupes of others.*

This is not an honourable qualification; it is a kind of left-handed wisdom, which even fools can sometimes practise, and villains always make the foundation of their designs:—but, alas! how often does it betray its votaries to their dishonour, if not to their destruction.

Though an occasional stratagem may be sometimes innocent, I am ever disposed to suspect the cause where it must be employed; for, after all, you will, I am sure, agree with me, that where artifice is not to be condemned *as a crime*, the necessity which demands it must be considered *as a misfortune.*

I have been led to write thus *Socratically* from the tenour of your letter; though, if my paper would allow me, I would take a frisk, and vary the scene; but I have only room to add, that I dined in Brook-street last Sunday, where many gracious things were said of you, not only by the old folks, but, which is better, by the *young virgins*. I went afterwards, not much to my credit, to Argyle Buildings, but there were no virgins there. So may God forgive me, and bless you, now, and all times.—Amen.

I remain, most truly and cordially,

Your's,

L. STERNE.

LETTER XXXII.

TO — — — —.

Coxwold, August 19, 1766.

AMONG your whimsicalities, my dear friend, for you have them as well as *Tristram*, there is not one of them which possesses a more amiable tendency than that gentle spirit of modern romance, which,

hadst thou lived in days of yore, would have made thee the veriest Knight Errant that ever brandished a spear or wore a vizard.

The very same spirit that has led thee from hence to the Bristol fountain, for no other earthly purpose but to let a Physical Maiden lean upon thine arm, and receive the healing waters from thine hand, would, in a former age, have urged thee to traverse forests and fight with monsters, for the sake of some *Dulcinea* whom thou hadst never seen; or, perhaps, have made a *red cross* knight of thee, and carried thee over lands and seas to Palestine.

For, to tell thee the truth, enthusiasm is in the very soul of thee; and, if thou wert born to live in some other planet, I might encourage all its glowing high-coloured vagaries; but, in this miserable, back-biting, cheating, pimping world of ours, it will not do; indeed, it will not.—And full well do I know, nor does this vaticination escape me without a sigh, that it will lead thee into a thousand scrapes, and some of them may be such as thou wilt not easily get out of, and should the for-

tunes of thine house be shaken by any of them, with all thy pleasant enjoyments—What then? you may say: and I think I hear you say so—Why, thy friends will then love thee.

For if foul Fortune should take thy stately palfrey, with all its gay and gilded trappings, from beneath thee; or if, while thou art sleeping by moon-light beneath a tree, it should escape from thee and find another master; or if the miserable banditti of the world should plunder thee, I know full well that we should see thee no more; for thou wouldst then find out some distant cell, and become an hermit; and endeavour to persuade thyself not to regret thy separation from those friends who will ever regret their separation from thee.

This enthusiastic spirit is in itself a good spirit; but there is no spirit whatever—no, not a *termagant* spirit, that requires a more active restraint or a more discreet regulation.

And so we will go next spring, if you please, to the Fountain of *Vaucluse*, and think of *Petrarch*, and, which is better, apostrophise his *Laura*—By that time, I

have reason to think my wife will be there, who, by the bye, is not *Laura*;—but my poor dear *Lydia* will be with her, and she is more than a *Laura* to her fond father.

Answer me on these things, and may God bless you!

I remain, with the most cordial truth,
Your affectionate

L. STERNE.

**THE
HISTORY
OF A
GOOD WARM WATCH-COAT,
A POLITICAL ROMANCE:
WITH EXPLANATORY NOTES.**

U.

W. H. O. T. 11

11

This image shows a blank, aged, light brown page, likely an endpaper or flyleaf of a book. The paper has a textured appearance with visible creases, discoloration, and small dark spots, suggesting it is old and possibly damaged. There is no text or other markings on the page.

Late Parson, Archbith. HERRING.

Parson of the Parish, Archbishop HUTTON.

John the Clerk, FOUNTAYNE, Dean
 of York.

Trim, Dr. TOPHAM.

Mark Slender, Dr. BRAITHWAITE.

Lorry Slim, LAURENCE STERNE.

William Doe, Mr. BIRDM—E.

Village, York.

Author, Mr. LAURENCE STERNE.

ADVERTISEMENT.

THIS little piece was written by Mr. STERNE in the year 1759, but, for private reasons, was then suppressed. The recovery of this satirical performance from oblivion, as worthy of so masterly a pen, will, it is hoped, be a sufficient excuse, with all lovers of literary merit, for thus bringing it to public view.

INTRODUCTION.

THE following account of this LETTER is taken from some anecdotes of STERNE's life prefixed to a small pamphlet in which it originally appeared.

„ For some time Mr. STERNE lived in a
„ retired manner, upon a small Curacy in
„ Yorkshire, and, probably, would have
„ remained in the same obscurity, if his
„ lively genius had not displayed itself
„ upon an occasion which secured him a
„ friend, and paved the way for his pro-
„ motion.—A person who filled a lucrative
„ benefice, was not satisfied with enjoying
„ it during his own life-time, but exerted
„ all his interest to have it intailed on his
„ wife and son after his decease: the gentle-
„ man that expected the reversion of this
„ post was Mr. Sterne's friend, who had
„ not, however, sufficient influence to pre-
„ vent the success of his adversary.—At
„ this time Sterne's satirical pen operated
„ so strongly, that the intended monopo-
„ lizer informed him, if he would suppress

„the publication of his sarcasm, he would
 „reign his pretensions to the next can-
 „didate.”

„The title of this piece, it appears, was
 „to have been, *The History of a Good*
 „*Warm Watch-Coat, with which the pre-*
 „*sent Possessor is not content to cover his*
 „*own Shoulders, unless he can cut out of*
 „*it a Petticoat for his Wife, and a Pair*
 „*of Breeches for his Son too. *)*”

*) The whole of this piece alludes to facts and circumstances confined to the city of York, and was occasioned by a controversy between Dr. Fountayne and Dr. Topham, in the year 1758, on a charge made by the latter against the former, of a breach of promise in withholding from him some preferment which he had reason to expect.

HISTORY

OF A

GOOD WARM WATCH-COAT.

(IN A LETTER TO A FRIEND.)

SIR,

IN my last, for want of something better to write about, I told you what a world of fending and proving we have had of late, in this little *) village of ours, about an old cast-off pair of black plush-breeches, **) which John, our parish-clerk, about ten years ago, it seems, had made a promise of to one Trim, who is our sexton and dog-whipper.—To this you write me word, that you have had more than either one or two occasions to know a good deal

*) York.

**) The Commissaryship of Pickering and Pocklington.

Sterne's Letters, Vol. II.

X

of the shifty behaviour of the said master Trim—and that you are astonished, nor can you for your soul conceive, how so worthless a fellow, and so worthless a thing into the bargain, could become the occasion of so much racket as I have represented.

Now, though you do not say expressly you could wish to hear any more about it, yet I see plainly enough I have raised your curiosity; and therefore, from the same motive that I slightly mentioned it at all in my last letter, I will in this give you a full and very circumstantial account of the whole affair.

But before I begin, I must first set you right in one very material point, in which I have misled you, as to the true cause of all this uproar amongst us—which does not take its rise, as I then told you, from the affair of the breeches, but, on the contrary, the whole affair of the breeches has taken its rise from it.—To understand which, you must know, that the first beginning of the squabble was not betwixt John the parish-clerk and Trim the sexton, but betwixt the parson of the parish and the said master Trim, about an old

watch-coat *) that had hung up many years in the church, which Trim had set his heart upon; and nothing would serve Trim but he must take it home, in order to have it converted into a warm under-petticoat for his wife, and a jerkin for himself against Winter; which, in a plaintive tone, he most humbly begged his Reverence would consent to.

I need not tell you, Sir, who have so often felt it, that a principle of strong compassion transports a generous mind sometimes beyond what is strictly right:—the parson was within an ace of being an honourable example of this very crime;—for no sooner did the distinct words—*petticoat*—*poor wife*—*warm*—*winter*, strike upon his ear—but his heart warmed—and before Trim had well got to the end of his petition (being a gentleman of a frank open temper) he told him he was welcome to it with all his heart and soul.—But, Trim, says he, as you see

*) A patent place given by the Archbishop to Dr. Topham for his life, and which in 1758 he solicited to be granted to one of his family after his death.

I am but just got down to my living, and am an utter stranger to all parish matters, knowing nothing about this old watch-coat you beg of me, having never seen it in my life, and therefore cannot be a judge whether 'tis fit for such a purpose, or, if it is, in truth, know not whether 'tis mine to bestow upon you or not—you must have a week or ten days patience till I can make some inquiries about it—and, if I find it is in my power, I tell you again, man, your wife is heartily welcome to an under-petticoat out of it, and you to a jerkin, was the thing as good again as you represent it.

It is necessary to inform you, Sir, in this place, that the parson was earnestly bent to serve Trim in this affair, not only from the motive of generosity, which I have justly ascribed to him, but likewise from another motive, and that was by making some sort of recompence for a multitude of small servises which Trim had occasionally done, and indeed was continually doing (as he was much about the house) when his own man was out of the way.—For all these reasons together, I

say, the parson of the parish intended to serve Trim in this matter to the utmost of his power. All that was wanting, was previously to inquire if any one had a claim to it, or whether, as it had time immemorial hung up in the church, the taking it down might not raise a clamour in the parish. These inquiries were the things that Trim dreaded in his heart.—He knew very well, that, if the parson should but say one word to the churchwardens about it, there would be an end of the whole affair. For this, and some other reasons not necessary to be told you at present, Trim was for allowing no time in this matter—but, on the contrary, doubled his diligence and importunity at the vicarage-house—plagued the whole family to death—pressed his suit morning, noon, and night; and, to shorten my story, teased the poor gentleman, who was but in an ill state of health, almost out of his life about it.

You will not wonder when I tell you, that all this hurry and precipitation on the side of master Trim, produced its natural effect on the side of the parson, and

that was, a suspicion that all was not right at the bottom.

He was one evening sitting alone in his study, weighing and turning this doubt every way in his mind, and after an hour and a half's serious deliberation upon the affair, and running over Trim's behaviour throughout—he was just saying to himself—*It must be so*—when a sudden rap at the door put an end to his soliloquy, and, in a few minutes, to his doubts too; for a labourer in the town, who deemed himself past his fifty-second year, had been returned by the constables in the militia list—and he had come with a groat in his hand to search the parish-register for his age. The parson bid the poor fellow put the groat into his pocket, and go into the kitchen—then shutting the study-door, and taking down the parish-register—*Who knows*, says he, *but I may find something here about this self-same watch-coat?* He had scarce unclasped the book, in saying this, when he popped on the very thing he wanted, fairly wrote in the first page, pasted to the inside of one of the covers, whereon was a memorandum about the very

thing in question, in these express words—*„Memorandum. The great watch-coat*
„was purchased and given above two hun-
„dred years ago, by the lord of the manor,
„to this parish-church, to the sole use and
„behoof of the poor sextons thereof, and
„their successors for ever, to be worn
„by them respectively in winterly cold
„nights, in ringing complines, passing-
„bells, etc. which the said lord of the
„manor had done in pity to keep the
„poor wretches warm, and for the good
„of his own soul, for which they were
„directed to pray,” etc. Just Heaven! said
the parson to himself, looking upwards,
what an escape have I had! Give this for
an under-petticoat to Trim's wife! I would
not have consented to such a defecration,
to be Primate of all England—nay I
would not have disturbed a single button
of it for all my tithes.

Scarce were the words out of his mouth, when in pops Trim with the whole subject of the exclamation under both his arms—I say, under both his arms—for he had actually got it ript and cut out ready, his own jerkin under one arm,

and the petticoat under the other, in order to carry to the taylor to be made up, and had just stepped in, in high spirits, to shew the parson how cleverly it had held out.

There are now many good similes subsisting in the world, but which I have neither time to recollect or look for, which would give you a strong conception of the astonishment and honest indignation which this unexpected stroke of Trim's impudence impressed upon the parson's looks—let it suffice to say, that it exceeded all fair description—as well as all power of proper resentment—except this, that Trim was ordered, in a stern voice, to lay the bundles down upon the table—to go about his business, and wait upon him, at his peril, the next morning at eleven precisely.—Against this hour, like a wise man, the parson had sent to desire John the parish-clerk, who bore an exceeding good character as a man of truth, and who, having moreover a pretty freehold of about eighteen pounds a year in the township, was a leading man in it; and, upon the whole, was such a one, of whom it might be said,

that he rather did honour to his office, than that his office did honour to him—him he sends for, with the churchwardens, and one of the fidesmen, a grave, knowing old man, to be present—for, as Trim had withheld the whole truth from the parson, touching the watch-coat, he thought it probable he would as certainly do the same thing to others. Though this, I said, was wise, the trouble of the precaution might have been spared—because the parson's character was unblemished—and he had ever been held by the world in the estimation of a man of honour and integrity.—Trim's character, on the contrary, was as well known, if not in the world, at least in all the parish, to be that of a little, dirty, pimping, pettifogging, ambidextrous fellow, who neither cared what he did or said of any, provided he could get a penny by it. This might, I said, have made any precaution needless—but you must know, as the parson had in a manner but just got down to his living, he dreaded the consequences of the least ill impression on his first entrance among his parishioners, which would have disabled him from do-

ing them the good he wished—so that, out of regard to his flock, more than the necessary care due to himself, he was resolved not to ly at the mercy of what resentment might vent, or malice lend an ear to.—

Accordingly the whole matter was rehearsed, from first to last, by the parson, in the manner I've told you, in the hearing of John the parish-clerk, and in the presence of Trim.

Trim had little to say for himself, except „ that the parson had absolutely promised to befriend him and his wife, in „ the affair, to the utmost of his power; „ that the watch-coat was certainly in his „ power, and that he might still give it him „ if he pleased.”

To this the parson's reply was short, but strong, „ that nothing was in his power „ er to do but what he could do honestly— „ that, in giving the coat to him and his „ wife, he should do a manifest wrong to the „ next sexton, the great watch-coat being „ the most comfortable part of the place— „ that he should moreover injure the right „ of his own successor, who would be just

„so much a worse patron as the worth of
„the coat amounted to; and, in a word,
„he declared, that his whole intent in pro-
„mising that coat, was charity to Trim,
„but wrong to no man—that was a reserve,
„he said, made in all cases of this kind:
„and he declared solemnly, *in verbo sa-*
„*cerdotis*, that this was his meaning, and
„was so understood by Trim himself.”

With the weight of this truth, and the great good sense and strong reason which accompanied all the parson said on the subject—poor Trim was driven to his last shift—and begged he might be suffered to plead his right and title to the watch-coat, if not by *promise*, at least by *servitude*.—It was well known how much he was entitled to it upon these scores—„that
„had blacked the parson’s shoes with
„count, and greazed his boots above
„times—that he had run for eggs in
„town upon all occasions—whetted
„knives at all hours—caught his horse,
„and rubbed him down—that, for his
„wife, she had been ready upon all occa-
„sions to char for them; and neither he
„nor she, to the best of his remembrance,

„ever took a farthing, or any thing beyond a mug of ale.” To this account of his services, he begged leave to add those of his wishes, which, he said, had been equally great.—He affirmed, and was ready, he said, to make it appear, by a number of witnesses, „he had drank his „Reverence’s health a thousand times (by „the by, he did not add, out of the parson’s own ale)—that he had not only „drank his health, but wished it, and „never came to the house, but asked his „man kindly how he did—that in particular, about half a year ago, when his „Reverence cut his finger in paring an „apple, he went half a mile to ask a cunning woman what was good to stanch „blood; and actually returned with a „bowweb in his breeches pocket. Nay, „as Trim, it was not a fortnight ago, „when your Reverence took that strong „charge, that I went to the far end of the „whole town to borrow you a closestool— „—and came back, as the neighbours who „flouted me will all bear witness, with the „pan upon my head, and never thought „it too much.” Trim concluded this pa-

thetic remonstrance, with saying, „He „hoped his Reverence's heart would not „suffer him to requite so many faithful „services by so unkind a return: that if „it was so, as he was the first, so he hoped he should be the last exemple of a „man of his condition so treated.”—This plan of Trim's defence, which Trim had put himself upon, could admit of no other reply than a general smile.—Upon the whole, let me inform you, that all that could be said *pro* and *con*, on both sides, being fairly heard, it was plain that Trim, in every part of this affair, had behaved very ill—and one thing, which was never expected to be known of him, happened in the course of this debate to come out against him, namely, that he had gone and told the parson, before he had set foot in his parish, that John his parson's clerk—his churchwardens, and some of the heads of the parish, were a parcel of scoundrels.—Upon the upshot, Trim was kicked out of doors, and told at his peril never to come there again.

At first, Trim huffed and bounced most terribly—swore he would get a warrant

—that nothing would serve him but he would call a by-law, and tell the whole parish how the parson had misused him; but cooling of that, as fearing the parson might possibly bind him over to his good behaviour, and, for aught he knew, might send him to the house of correction, he lets the parson alone, and, to revenge himself, falls foul upon the clerk, who had no more to do in the quarrel than you or I—rips up the promise of the old—cast—pair of black—plush—breeches; and raises an uproar in the town about it, notwithstanding it had slept ten years—but all this, you must know, is looked upon in no other light but as an artful stroke of generalship in Trim to raise a dust, and cover himself under the disgraceful chastisement he has undergone.— —

If your curiosity is not yet satisfied—I will now proceed to relate the *battle* of the *breeches* in the same exact manner I have done that of the watch-coat.

Be it known then, that about ten years ago, when John was appointed parish-clerk of this church, this said Trim took

no small pains to get into John's good graces, in order, as it afterwards appeared, to coax a promise out of him of a pair of breeches, which John had then by him, of black plush, not much the worse for wearing—Trim only begged, for God's sake, to have them bestowed upon him when John should think fit to cast them.—

Trim was one of those kind of men who loved a bit of finery in his heart, and would rather have a tattered rag of a better body's, than the best plain whole thing his wife could spin him.

John, who was naturally unsuspicious, made no more difficulty of promising the breeches, than the parson had done in promising the great coat; and indeed with something less reserve — because the breeches were John's own, and he could give them, without wrong, to whom he thought fit.

It happened, I was going to say unluckily, but should rather say most luckily, for Trim, for he was the only gainer by it, that a quarrel about some six or eight weeks after this, broke out betwixt the late parson of the parish and John the

clerk. Somebody (and it was thought to be nobody but Trim) had put it into the parson's head, „that John's desk *) in the „church was at the least four inches high- „er than it should be—that the thing „gave offence, and was indecorous, inas- „much as it approached too near upon a „level with the parson's desk itself.”—This hardship the parson complained of loudly, and told John, one day after prayers, „he could bear it no longer— „and would have it altered, and brought „down as it should be.” John made no other reply, but „that the desk was not „of his raising— —that it was not one „hair-breadth higher than he found it— „and that as he found it, so he would „leave it.—In short, he would neither „make an encroachment, neither would „he suffer one.”—The late parson might have his virtues, but the leading part of his character was not humility—so that John's stiffness in this point was not like-

*) Alluding to the right claimed by Dr. Fountayne against the Archbishop of appointing preachers for vacant stalls.

ly to reconcile matters.—This was Trim's harvest.

After a friendly hint to John to stand his ground, away hies Trim to make his market at the vicarage.—What passed there I will not say, intending not to be uncharitable; so shall content myself with only guessing at it, from the sudden change that appeared in Trim's dress for the better— —for he had left his old ragged coat, hat, and wig, in the stable, and was come forth strutting across the churchyard, clad in a good charitable cast-coat, large hat and wig, which the parson had just given him.—Ho! ho! hollo, John, cries Trim, in an insolent bravo, as loud as ever he could bawl—see here, my lad, how fine I am!—The more shame for you, answered John seriously—Do you think, Trim, says he, such finery, gained by such services, becomes you, or can wear well?—Fy upon it, Trim, I could not have expected this from you, considering what friendship you pretended, and how kind I have ever been to you—how many shillings and sixpences I have generously lent you in your distress.

ses,—nay, it was but the other day that I promised you these black plush breeches I have on.—Rot your breeches, quoth Trim, (for Trim's brain was half turned with his new finery) rot your breeches, says he, I would not take them up, were they laid at my door—give them, and be d—d to you, to whom you like—I would have you to know I can have a better pair of the parson's any day in the week.—John told him plainly, as his word had once passed him, he had a spirit above taking advantage of his insolence, in giving them away to another—but, to tell him his mind freely, he thought he had got so many favours of that kind, and was so likely to get many more for the same services, of the parson, that he had better give up the breeches, with good-nature, to some one who would be more thankful for them.

Here John mentioned Mark Slender, (who, it seems, the day before, had asked John for them,) not knowing they were under promise to Trim—„Come, „Trim, says he, let poor Mark have „them—you know he has not a pair to

„his a—: besides you see he is just of
„my size, and they will fit to a T; where-
„as if I give them to you, look ye,
„they are not worth much; and besides,
„you could not get your backside into
„them, if you had them, without tearing
„them all to pieces.”—Every tittle of this
was most undoubtedly true; for Trim,
you must know, by foul feeding, and
playing the good fellow at the parson’s,
was grown somewhat gross about the low-
er parts, *if not higher*; so that, as all
John said upon the occasion was fact,
Trim, with much ado, and after a hun-
dred hums and hahs, at last, out of mere
compassion to Mark, *signs, seals, and*
delivers up ALL RIGHT, INTEREST, AND
PRETENSIONS WHATSOEVER, IN AND TO
THE SAID BREECHES, THEREBY BINDING
HIS HEIRS, EXECUTORS, ADMINISTRATORS,
AND ASSIGNS, NEVER MORE TO CALL THE
SAID CLAIM IN QUESTION.—All this
renunciation was set forth, in an ample
manner, to be in pure pity to Mark’s na-
kedness—but the secret was, Trim had
an eye to, and firmly expected, in his
own mind, the great green pulpit-cloth,

and old velvet cushion *), which were that very year to be taken down— —which, by the by, could he have wheedled John a second time, as he had hoped, would have made up the loss of the breeches seven fold.

Now, you must know, this pulpit-cloth and cushion were not in John's gift, but in the churchwardens, etc. However, as I said above, that John was a leading man in the parish, Trim knew he could help him to 'em if he would—but John had got a surfeit of him— —so, when the pulpit-cloth, etc. were taken down, they were immediately given (John having a great say in it) to William Doe **), who understood very well what use to make of them.

As for the old breeches, poor Mark lived to wear them but a short time, and they got into the possession of Lorry Slim, an unlucky wight, by whom they are

*) The Commissaryship of the Dean of York and Commissaryship of the Dean and chapter of York.

**) Mr. Stables.

still worn— —in truth, as you will guess, they are very thin by this time.

But Lorry has a light heart, and what recommends them to him, is this, that, as thin as they are, he knows that Trim, let him say what he will to the contrary, still envies the possessor of them, and, with all his pride, would be very glad to wear them after him.

Upon this footing have these affairs slept quietly for near ten years— —and would have slept for ever, but for the unlucky kicking-bout, which, as I said, has ripped this squabble up afresh; so that it was no longer ago than last week, that Trim met and insulted John in the public town-way before a hundred people — —taxed him with the promise of the old cast pair of black breeches notwithstanding Trim's solemn renunciation— —twitted him with the pulpit-cloth and velvet cushion— —as good as told him he was ignorant of the common duties of his clerkship; adding, very insolently, that he knew not so much as to give out a common psalm in tune.

John contented himself by giving a plain answer to every article that Trim had laid to his charge, and appealed to his neighbours, who remembered the whole affair — — and, as he knew there was never any thing to be got by wrefling with a chimney-sweeper, he was going to take his leave of Trim for ever. But hold — — the mob by this time had got round them, and their high mightinesses insisted upon having Trim tried upon the spot.

Trim was accordingly tried, and after a full hearing, was convicted a second time, and handled more roughly by one or more of them than even at the parson's. — —

Trim, says one, are you not ashamed of yourself, to make all this rout and disturbance in the town, and set neighbours together by the ears, about an old — — worn-out — — pair of cast — — breeches, not worth half a crown? Is there a cast coat, or a place in the whole town, that will bring you in a shilling, but what you have snapped up, like a greedy hound as you are? —

In the first place, are you not sexton

and dog-whipper, worth three pounds a-year? Then you begged the churchwardens to let your wife have the washing and darning of the church-linen, which brings you in thirteen shillings and four pence; and then you have six shillings and eight pence for oiling and winding up the clock, both paid you at Easter—the pounder's place, which is worth forty shillings a-year, you have got that too—you are the bailiff, which the late parson got you, which brings you in forty shillings more.

Beside all this, you have six pounds a-year, paid you quarterly, for being mole-catcher to the parish. „, Aye, says the luckless wight above-mentioned, (who was standing close by him with the plush breeches on), you are not only mole-catcher, Trim, but you catch STRAY CONIES too in the dark, and you pretend a licence for it, which, I trow, will be looked into at the next quarter-sessions.” I maintain it, I have a licence, says Trim, blushing as red as scarlet—I have a licence, and, as I farm a warren in the next parish, I will catch conies every

hour of the night. You catch conies! says a toothless old woman just passing by.

This set the mob a-laughing, and sent every man home in perfect good humour, except Trim, who waddled very slowly off with that kind of inflexible gravity, only to be equalled by one animal in the creation, and surpassed by none.

I am,

Sir, yours, etc. etc.

POSTSCRIPT.

I HAVE broke open my letter to inform you, that I missed the opportunity of sending it by the messenger, who I expected would have called upon me in his return through this village to York: so it has lain a week or ten days by me.— I am not sorry for the disappointment, because something has since happened, in continuation of this affair, which I am thereby enabled to transmit to you, all under one trouble.

When I finished the above account, I thought (as did every soul in the parish)

Trim had met with so thorough a rebuff from John the parish-clerk, and the towns-folks, who all took against him, that Trim would be glad to be quiet, and let the matter rest.

But, it seems, it is not half an hour ago since Trim sallied forth again, and having borrowed a fow-gelder's horn, with hard blowing he got the whole town round him, and endeavoured to raise a disturbance, and fight the whole battle over again — — alledged that he had been used in the last fray worse than a dog, not by John the parish-clerk, for I should not, quoth Trim, have valued him a rush, fingle-hands — — but all the town sided with him, and twelve men in *buckram* set upon me, all at once, and kept me in play at sword's point for three hours together.

Besides, quoth Trim, there were two misbegotten knaves in Kendal-green, who lay all the while in ambush in John's own house, and they all sixteen came upon my back, and let drive at me altogether — — a plague, says Trim, of all cowards!

Trim repeated this story above a dozen times, which made some of the neighbours pity him, thinking the poor fellow

crack-brained, and that he actually believed what he said.

After this, Trim dropped the affair of the breeches, and began a fresh dispute about the reading-desk, which I told you had occasioned some small dispute between the *late* parson and John, some years ago.—This reading-desk, as you will observe, was but an episode wove into the main story by the by; for the main affair was *the battle of the breeches and the great coat*.

However, Trim being at last driven out of these two citadels—he has seized hold, in his retreat, of this reading-desk, with a view, as it seems, to take shelter behind it.

I cannot say but the man has fought it out obstinately enough; and, had his cause been good, I should have really pitied him. For, when he was driven out of the *great watch-coat*, you see he did not run away;—no,—he retreated behind the breeches, and when he could make nothing of it behind the breeches, he got behind the reading-desk. To what other hold Trim will next retreat, the politicians of this village are not agreed. Some

think his next move will be towards the rear of the parson's boot; but, as it is thought he cannot make a long stand there, others are of opinion, that Trim will once more in his life get hold of the parson's horse, and charge upon him, or perhaps behind him; but, as the horse is not easy to be caught, the more general opinion is, that, when he is driven out of the reading-desk, he will make his last retreat in such a manner, as if possible, to gain the *close-stool*, and defend himself behind it to the very last drop.

If Trim should make this movement, by my advice, he should be left, besides his citadel, in full possession of the field of battle, where 'tis certain he will keep every body a league off, and may hop by himself till he is weary. Besides, as Trim seems bent upon *purging* himself, and may have abundance of foul humours to work off, I think he cannot be better placed.

But this is all matter of speculation—Let me carry you back to matter of fact, and tell you what kind of stand Trim has actually made behind the said desk: „Neighbours and townsmen all, I will be

„sworn before my Lord Mayor, that John
„and his nineteen men in *buckram* have
„abused me worse than a dog; for they
„told you that I played fast and go loose
„whith the *late* parson and him in that
„old dispute of theirs about the *reading-*
„*desk*, and that I made matters worse
„between them, and not better.”

Of this charge, Trim declared he was innocent as the child that was unborn—that he would be book-sworn he had no hand in it.

He produced a strong witness and moreover insinuated, that John himself, instead of being angry for what he had done in it, had actually thanked him—
Ay, Trim, says the wight in the plush breeches, but that was, Trim, the day before John found thee out. Besides, Trim, there is nothing in that; for the very year that you was made town's pounder, thou knowest well, that I both thanked thee myself, and moreover gave thee a good warm supper, for turning John Lund's cows and horses out of my hard corn close, which, if thou hadst not done, (as thou toldst me), I should have lost my whole

crop; whereas John Lund and Thomas Patt, who are both here to testify, and are both willing to take their oaths on't, that thou thyself was the very man who set the gate open—and after all, it was not thee, Trim, 'twas the black-smith's poor lad who turned them out—so that a man may be thanked, and rewarded too, for a good turn which he never did, nor ever did intend.

Trim could not sustain this unexpected froke—so Trim marched off the field without colours flying, or his horn sounding, or any other ensigns of honour whatever. —Whether, after this, Trim intends to rally a second time—or whether he may not take it into his head to claim the victory—none but Trim himself can inform you.

However, the general opinion, upon the whole, is this, that in three several pitched battles, *Trim* has been so *trimmed*, as never disastrous hero was *trimmed* before,—

T H E E N D.

